



The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of

By Nick Nilsson
Fitness-eBooks.com

Introduction:

Quick Note on Updates - In addition to the completely [updated exercise section](#), check out the updates to [Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) and [Curl Squats](#), which are part of the original book. I've also included a [Fat Loss section](#) to help you show off those new abs and an updated list of [sample workouts](#), which include the new exercises. You'll get two completely new [lower back exercises](#) to help balance out your midsection.

In this book you will find 77 fantastic exercises for the abdominals - exercises you've probably never seen or even imagined! Here is a rundown of the sections you'll find in this ebook:

How To Do It:

Read through the exercise descriptions thoroughly so you know exactly what the exercise is going to accomplish, how to execute it properly and safely and how to best incorporate the exercise into your workouts.

Common Errors:

The "**Common Errors**" section of each exercise will let you know some of the typical ways the exercise is done improperly so that you can take the steps to correct yourself before they even happen!



Tricks:

Finally, be sure to read through all the "**Tricks**" for each exercise. The tips will help you maximize these already amazing exercises.

Free Bonus Items:

Also, don't forget to download your **free bonus items!** You'll find the download links when you click on the [Bonuses](#) link found at the bottom of every page.

I Want Your Feedback!

I welcome your comments and questions! Please do not hesitate to contact me via email at BetterU@fitstep.com. Let me know what you liked or didn't like about this book, and specifically how I can best serve your needs.



Exercise Videos

When you see this graphic:



That means the exercise has a video demonstration!

Click here to go to the Online Video Library now!

Know Your Training Level

The exercises in this book are labeled according to difficulty level. Some exercises are fine for all training levels while some are more appropriate for intermediate or more advanced trainers. Even if you're an advanced trainer, you will find ALL the exercises challenging and unique!

All Training Levels

Intermediate

Advanced

Please Note:

Any exercise program contains an element of risk. Be aware that the exercises in the book are not familiar to you and, even though every attempt has been made to ensure safe instruction, how and if you decide to execute the exercises is ultimately your responsibility.

By reading the information in this book you hereby agree to the [Terms and Conditions of use](#).

The Exercises:

These exercises have been separated into 4 areas: upper abs, lower abs, rotational/obliques and total abdominal exercises. Keep in mind that even though the exercises are listed in a specific section, they may also affect other areas of the abdominal region. It is rare to find an exercise that only affects one single area of the abdominals.

Here are quick links to the index pages of each abdominal region:

<u>Upper Abs</u>	<u>Lower Abs</u>
<u>Rotational/Obliques</u>	<u>Total Ab Exercises</u>

[Exercise Update #1](#)

Extra Topics

<u>Sample Workouts</u>	<u>Why Crunches Aren't The Best Exercise For Flattening The Stomach</u>
<u>The Importance of Lower Back Training</u>	<u>Fat Loss Articles</u>

Note: The information found in this program does not constitute medical advice and should not be taken as such. Consult your physician before taking part in any exercise program.

Upper Abs	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Lower Abs	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Rotational/Obliques	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Total Ab Exercises	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Exercise Update #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Extra Topics	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Upper Abdominals



Pushdown Crunches to the Floor

All Training Levels

Go!



This exercise puts incredible tension on the abs at the bottom of the movement. All that you need is a high pulley and bar, just like you're doing a pulldown, the only difference being you push the bar all the way to the floor.

Stiff-Arm Cable Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

Similar to the regular cable crunch, but rather than holding the bar behind your head, you hold the bar at arms-length in front of you. This puts great tension on the abs by forcing them to not only do the crunch, but to stabilize and support the weight held at arms length in front of you.

Declined Body Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

This simple variation of the floor crunch allows you to put all the tension of that exercise on the extreme upper abs. All it takes is a simple change in body position!

Cross-Bench Stretched Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!



Using only a regular flat bench, you can hit the abs in their stretched range of motion. This is the range of motion that ab exercises done flat on the floor (such as regular crunches) miss. The difference is like going from working your biceps with half range curls to doing full range curls.

Bench Press Crunches

Intermediate

Go!



Want to build your lockout bench press strength? The abs play a large but little known role in the last few inches of the bench press. With stronger abs, target-trained through this exercise, you will be able to immediately lock out more weight.

Go!



Crunch Roll-Ups

All Training Levels

Looking to set your abs on fire at the end of a workout? This simple rolling technique targets the peak contraction of the abdominals by powerfully using momentum. The position you finish in is the maximum possible contracted position your abdominals can get into!

Go!

Partner-Resisted Crunches

Intermediate

Using your training partner as resistance can result in incredible ab workouts. See how you can easily focus on the negative phase of the crunch movement by having someone else give you a "hand." You've never felt a burn like this!

Go!

Leg Curl Machine Crunches

Intermediate

The strength curve of the leg curl machine can easily be adapted to the crunch. By using this machine for crunches, you can use the weight stack to increase the resistance on the abs. You can also use it to perform negative training for the abs all by yourself!

Between-The-Legs Low Pulley Crunches

Intermediate

Go!

This exercise puts tremendous tension on the abs by utilizing an extremely short range of motion coupled with heavy resistance in the very most contracted position the abs can be in.

Foot-Resisted Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

Increase the resistance of the regular crunch by using your legs and feet. This is a great exercise for when you're traveling or don't have access to special equipment and need to increase the resistance on the abs.

Ab Cannonballs

Intermediate

Go!



Using momentum to work the abs is not always a bad thing, especially when using that momentum can dramatically increase the weight you can use for an ab exercise. The momentum doesn't take tension away...it gives you the ability to add more!

Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches

Intermediate

Go!

This exercise puts a tremendous stretch on the upper abs and the entire rib cage area, helping to develop not only the abs but the intercostal muscles that aid in breathing (excellent for sports that require great lung capacity). Working against resistance allows you to build great strength with the abs stretched.

Low Pulley Preacher Crunches

Intermediate

Go!

Using the preacher bench to act as a pivot point allows you to get a HUGE stretch on the upper abs followed by a tremendous contraction right where it counts. Your abs have never experienced this type of stretch and tension before!

Seated Swiss Ball Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

This exercise uses the Swiss Ball not as something to lay on or roll over but as the resistance itself! It provides an excellent contraction in the upper abs even though it only allows for a short range of motion.

Decline Cable Crunches

Intermediate

Go!

Using the decline bench and the low pulley, this exercise allows you to place extremely heavy resistance directly onto the upper abs.

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Lower Abdominals



High Pulley Lying Cable Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

This unique exercise utilizes the high pulley to work the lower abs using a pushing movement rather than a pulling movement. The angle of the pull directly targets that hard-to-reach, extreme lower ab area.

Seated Hanging Leg Raises

Intermediate

Go!

Targeting the most powerful contracted position of the lower abs is not easy. Generally, the lower abs don't have enough leverage or strength to get the lower abs into the fully contracted position. This exercises STARTS in that position.

One Arm Hanging Leg Raises

Advanced

Go!

Working the lower abs in a very unstable environment has great benefits to core strength and stability. This exercise takes an old favorite and adds a twist that will have your lower abs screaming!

Forearm Supported Leg Raises

All Training Levels

Go!

You'll never look at the Hanging Leg Raise chair the same way again. This version of that exercise will literally TRIPLE the tension on your abs. You will not only do the leg raise, your abs will be forced to support almost your entire bodyweight as you do the exercise! This one must be tried to be believed.

Swiss Ball Leg Raises

Intermediate

Go!

Developing the stability and strength of the core muscles of your body is extremely important. This exercise will work on the stability of the lower abdominals while strongly working the entire abdominal area.

Go!



Swiss Ball Roll-Ups

Advanced

Bringing the thighs up towards the chest is the cornerstone of lower ab work. This exercise utilizes the Swiss Ball and decline sit-up board to bring the thighs up to the chest and ratchet up the tension on the lower abs and ends in a tremendous contraction.

Go!



Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins

Advanced

This exercise uses a similar principle to the roll-up with one major difference...your legs will be supported in a sling made from a hip belt. This sling allows you to thoroughly work the lower abs from every conceivable angle and very easily!

Go!

High Pulley Hook Crunches

All Training Levels

Using the high pulley to suspend your legs provides an extremely unique angle of pull on the lower abs. It allows you to work the lower abs with zero lower back stress!

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Rotational/Oblique Exercises

(Also Includes Serratus Anterior)



Cable Gripping Trunk Twists

All Training Levels

The regular cable twist is a very good exercise. This variation takes this exercise and makes it FAR more effective. It will work the ENTIRE core girdle in one movement, flattening your abdominal area and developing tremendous explosive rotational power and strength.



Two Dumbbell Ball Twists

Intermediate

Using only a Swiss Ball and two dumbbells, you can achieve an extraordinary ab-tightening contraction around the entire midsection musculature. This exercise places a great stretch on the obliques along with great tension, forcing quick abdominal development.



Trunk Twists With a Twist

All Training Levels

Looking for an exercise to tighten up the love handles? This exercise will do it. Focusing on peak contraction using the special techniques this exercise teaches you will allow you to take inches off your waist. The traditional broom twist is basically useless!

Side Lying Free Crunches

Intermediate

Go!

While most direct oblique exercises, such as side bends, place tension on the obliques in a way that builds the muscle outwards (making the love handle area larger), this exercise forces the obliques to tighten up extremely hard and get smaller rather than building outwards.

Resting Forearm Cable Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

This exercise literally FORCES the obliques into proper alignment during a cable crunch movement. How you hold the bar while you're doing the exercise hits the obliques without torquing the lower back.

Dumbbell Side-To-Sides

All Training Levels

Go!



If you need a way to tighten and strengthen your midsection, the Dumbbell Side-To-Side is the exercise for you. It will develop the rock-solid core that is essential for peak sports and lifting performance. It also has an added bonus of building a steel-like girdle of muscle around your abdomen to help you stay injury-free!

Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor

All Training Levels

Go!

This exercise puts a good stretch on the uppermost area of the obliques (just below the pecs) then comes down with an extremely strong cross-tension contraction on the obliques on the other side. Both sides of your abs are hit in different ways with one movement.

Cable Crossover Arms-Back Crunches

Intermediate

Go!

This exercise uses a direct line of pull on the oblique muscles that run down your sides. This one directly develops those fingers of muscle that will help make your midsection stand out.

Go!



Swiss Ball Side Rolls

Intermediate

The Swiss Ball is one of the most effective abdominal training tools there is. This exercise takes full advantage of the rolling action of the ball, smoothly working both sides of the abdominal area as well as all the stabilizing muscles.

Go!



Standing Barbell Side to Sides

All Training Levels

To build tremendous functional strength in the abs, you must do exercises that use the muscles in ways similar to how they're used in the real world. This simple rotational barbell exercise uses resistance and rotation to accomplish this goal.

Go!

One Knee Cable Crunch

All Training Levels

Positioning of the limbs and body can have a huge impact on how the muscles of the abdominal area are called into action. This simple technique for the standard cable crunch throws the tension onto the side abs rather than just the front area.

Go!



Serratus/Intercostal Cable Crunches

All Training Levels

This unique cable exercise allows you to work the serratus and intercostal muscles, using the high pulley to focus the tension directly on the target area.

Go!



Serratus Pulldowns

All Training Levels

The little fingers of muscle beside your chest are the *Serratus Anterior* muscles. When fully developed, they serve to draw the eye into the midsection. The much-sought-after finished look that they give you when developed can be achieved with the help of this exercise.



Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups

All Training Levels

These two exercises directly target the function of the Serratus Anterior muscles, which is to pull the shoulder blades down and forward. One is done from a pushing perspective, the other from a pulling perspective.

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Total Abdominal Exercises



Go!

Curl Squats

All Training Levels

If you're looking to build incredible core strength and give your squat and deadlift a tremendous boost, this exercise is exactly what you're looking for. It is targeted to building the support strength you need for a strong squat.

Go!



Double Cable Crunches, a.k.a. Nilsson Crunches

Intermediate

Looking to push your abs to the absolute limit of how much weight they can handle? This exercise removes all limits from the cable crunch, allowing you to use the maximum amount of weight the abs are capable of moving.

Go!



Cable Push Crunches

All Training Levels

Simply the most complete application of tension from stretch to full contraction that I've ever found in an abdominal exercise. Your abs won't know what hit them.

Bench End Leg Raise/Cable Crunches

Intermediate

Go!



This exercise will have your abs screaming for mercy. Using the tension of the cable from one direction and your bodyweight from the other, you will be hitting both your upper and lower abs simultaneously, effectively doubling the tension you're putting your abs.

The "Ab Ripper"

Intermediate

Go!



Imagine the feeling in your cross-tension in your abs when you apply a strong pushing force to one side and a strong pulling force to the other. Your core muscles must take those opposing forces and stabilize the body. This exercise is guaranteed to hit your abs in ways you've NEVER experienced before.

Reverse Leg Raises

Intermediate

Go!



This exercise works the abs in an extremely unique fashion. It can be done using only bodyweight but actually uses the abs to draw the lower body up and in (bringing the pelvis towards the rib cage), rather than crunching the rib cage down towards the pelvis. This is excellent for tightening the waist.

Wall-Walker Sissy Squats

Advanced

Go!



This exercise appears to be, at first glance, a quadricep exercise. Don't let that fool you, though. The support and stabilizing tension that is put through the abs with this exercise is phenomenal. You also get the ability to add a tremendous amount of weight to the exercise, which makes ideal for building core strength.

Abdominal Sit-Ups

All Training Levels

Go!

This exercise is a cross between a crunch and a sit-up. It utilizes a blocking technique to preferentially activate the abdominal muscles, forcing them to support your torso. You get all the tension of a sit-up plus abdominal-muscle targeting of the crunch wrapped up into one exercise.

Cable Janda Sit-Ups

All Training Levels

Go!

The Janda Sit-Up is an extremely effective way to target the abs without the involvement of the hip flexors. This variation of the Janda allows you to do it without expensive specialized equipment or a spotter.

Ball Pullover Crunch Supports

Intermediate

Go!



Your abs will be put to the test in a variety of ways through every section of this exercise. By combining resistance from several different directions over the course of a rep, your abs will be challenged to not only pull but push and support at the same time.

Small Ball Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

All you need for this one is a small ball! This provides a better curve for your back to round to increase the muscle activation in the abs. The smaller ball also increases instability, making the exercise even more effective!

Two Ball Static Holds

Intermediate

Go!

This exercise works the abs with a tremendous degree of instability, making it a very effective core movement. You basically have nothing solid to stabilize yourself on while you are performing this exercise!

Ball Arm Scissors

Intermediate

Go!

This exercise stresses the abs in a very unique fashion - one that is extremely applicable to sports such as cross-country skiing, swimming and paddling. The cross-tension placed on the abs during this exercise works synergistically with the the chest and back to build diagonal strength through the core.

See Saw Crunches

Intermediate

Go!



This unique exercise allows you to hit both the upper and lower abs in one cable movement by using your back as a fulcrum like a see-saw. This dramatically increases the tension of the exercise and the efficiency of your workout.

Combat Crunches

Advanced

Go!

Perfect ab training for the boxer or martial artist. This gets your abs used to frequent impact, teaching them how to deal with the force of blows to the stomach. This can help you defeat one of the core boxing strategies of working the midsection to tire the opponent out. Your abs will be trained for it!

Lean Back Cable Supports

All Training Levels

Go!

The torso-supporting function of the abs is put to the test with this exercise. As you change position, you will dynamically work the supporting muscles of the entire midsection.

Leg Press Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!



All you need for this one is a leg press machine. The range of motion is small but the tension you can put on the abs is quite good. This exercise is ideal for building supporting strength in the abs without overly stressing the rest of the body.

Bar and Ball Roll-Ins

Advanced

Go!

Combine the instability of the ball with the instability of a rolling barbell and add in a roll-in movement and you've got yourself an extremely powerful ab stability builder.

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Update Exercises



Go!



Inverse Crunches

All Training Levels

This exercise is one of the most powerful low-equipment exercises you can do. It uses the weight of your entire lower body and places it directly on the abdominals.

Go!



Pinchy Sit-Ups

Intermediate

Similar in concept to a Janda Sit-Up, the Pinchy Sit-Up increases the tension on the abs by activating other muscle groups during the movement.

Side Ab Push-Ups

Intermediate

Go!

The side abdominal wall is often worked using exercises like side bends. These have a tendency to build the obliques up too much. This exercise tightens the entire side area rather than building up.

Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises

All Training Levels

Go!



This is a variation of the Bench Press Crunch that uses the counterbalance of the barbell to allow you to strongly work the lower abs.

Side Towel Rows

All Training Levels

Go!

It's tough to find good low-equipment rotational exercises for the abs. This exercise uses only a towel and solid object to mimic an excellent rotational cable exercise.

Foot Resisted Side Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

By using your own limbs as resistance and using them to push against each other in specific ways, you can effectively increase the tension on your side abdominal wall while doing crunches.

Bridging Supports

Advanced

Go!

This is a tough, low-equipment exercise that relies primarily on body position and isometric contraction to really work the abs hard. Your abs will be forced to support almost your entire bodyweight.

Hanging Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!



Similar in looks to a leg raise, the Hanging Crunch uses your lower body for direct resistance but involves the upper abs instead of the lower abs.

Ground Push Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

Looking for an intense contracted-position exercise for the abs but don't have cable equipment to get it? This zero-equipment exercise provides an extremely intense contraction using only body position and bodyweight.

Drawn and Quartered

Intermediate

Go!



If you're looking for an absolutely incredible amount of tension on the entire midsection, this is the exercise for you. Using direct cable resistance from opposite directions and on a diagonal, you will apply tension unlike any other exercise you've ever tried before.

Leg Press Push Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!

This exercise is similar to doing a resisted crunch but the range of motion is much greater and so is the available resistance! You'll develop maximum tension on the abs in their most contracted position.

Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups

All Training Levels

Go!



This is an exercise that uses unique body positions and tension from your upper body resisting your lower body to create resistance in the abs.

Towel Cradle Side Crunches

All Training Levels

Go!



Ordinarily, you would think that supporting yourself with a towel behind your back would make an exercise easier. Not this time! This unique exercise allows you use the towel to take the hip flexors out of the side crunch movement and work the side abs very strongly.

Go!



Momentum Sit-Ups

Intermediate

This exercise relies on momentum to work the abs. Instead of using slow, deliberate movements, you will be exploding up to give the abs a very different type of work.

Go!



Barbell Lever Pulls

All Training Levels

This exercise uses the bar as a lever, allowing you to work against that lever instead of the direct resistance itself. This is a very unique form of resistance that is quite functional.

Go!

Crab Walk Leg Raises

Intermediate

Using only body position techniques, you can get excellent tension on the lower abs while simultaneously working abdominal stability.

Go!



Barbell Baton Twirling

Intermediate

This exercise works by placing rotational stress on the abs. As you turn the barbell, your abs are forced to stabilize while proving the force for the barbell rotation. It's useful for developing core stability and upper body strength.

Go!



EZ Bar Rollers

All Training Levels

This is a relatively simple exercise that uses an EZ curl bar for movement. You must use abdominal strength to support your torso as you roll the bar from side to side.

Go!

Feet-On-Wall Static Holds

Intermediate

All you need is a wall or other solid surface to work the abs with a strong isometric movement. It's similar to the Plank yet the wall adds a new dimension of tension.

Go!

Lying Leg Resistance Raises and Crunches

All Training Levels

Looking for added resistance on the abs but have no equipment to do it with? This simple use of leg positioning adds tremendous tension to the standard leg raise movement.

Go!

Side Claw Pulls

All Training Levels

This is a zero-equipment exercise designed to target the side abdominals. It's easy on the lower back as it's done isometrically.



Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls

All Training Levels

All you need for this exercise is a weight plate - it strongly works the side stabilizing muscles of the abdominal area.

Upper Abs 	Lower Abs 
Rotational/Obliques 	Total Ab Exercises 
Exercise Update #1 	Extra Topics 

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Extra Topics

[Sample Workouts](#)

[Why Crunches Aren't The Best Exercise For Flattening The Stomach](#)

[The Importance of Lower Back Training](#)

Fat Loss Articles

You can have the best abs in the world but if they're hidden under a layer of fat, you won't be able to see them! The information in these articles will help you get rid of the extra and show off your new abs!

- [10 Things You Can Do To Lose Fat Without Even Trying](#)
- [Why We Get Fat - Hunting Big Macs and Gathering French Fries](#)
- [What Do You Mean Low-Intensity Training Isn't The Best For Fat Burning?](#)
- [The Insider Secrets of Interval Training - Learn How Now!](#)
- [Fat-Loss Circuit Training - Now is the time to try this revolutionary fat-burning, metabolism-boosting training technique!](#)
- [I Didn't Realize How Important Protein Was For Fat Loss Until I Discovered Something That Blew My Mind...](#)
- [Nine Surefire Ways to Gain Fat](#)
- [How Fat Loss Pills Can Make You Fatter](#)
- [Follow the Path of MOST Resistance! Learn why weight training is the fast track to sculpting your body.](#)

Fat Loss eBooks

["Metabolic Surge - Rapid Fat Loss"](#)

By Nick Nilsson

Learn exactly how to eat and train to lose maximum fat as quickly as possible while keeping and even GAINING muscle mass.

[Read the review](#)

["Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle"](#)

By Tom Venuto

Discover the fat loss secrets of one of the masters - Tom Venuto. This guide to fat loss will teach you from every angle.

[Read the review](#)

["Ultimate Fat Burning Diet Primer"](#)

By Paul Crane

Learn more about a basic approach to fat loss that will help you eat better and lose the weight.

[Read the review](#)

["The Insiders Secrets to Fat Loss Supplements and Dieting"](#)

By Will Brink

Get the inside scoop on all the best and worst in fat loss supplementation.

["All Star Trainer's Secrets to Maximum Muscle Gain & Maximum Fat Loss in 30 Days"](#)

By Lewis Wolk

The best trainers on the Internet share there incredible secrets for lose fat and gaining muscle as quickly as possible.

[Read the review](#)

["Ultimate Weight Loss Revealed"](#)

By Brad Callen

Get a down-to-earth approach to fat loss with "Ultimate Weight Loss Revealed." Just no-nonsense, good advice for burning off your excess weight.

"Burn Fat Fast!"

By Jesse Cannone

If you want to learn the basics about powerful and effective fat loss, "Burn Fat Fast" will get you started quick and easily in the right direction.

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Sample Ab Workouts

Here are a number of sample workouts that you can work with to get the most of these abdominal exercises. Remember, these are only samples and **I encourage you to experiment with other exercise combinations!** These workouts are categorized according to specific goals. The exercises included in these short programs are targeted to those specific goals.

[Core Strength](#)

[Low to No Equipment](#)

[Waist Minimizers](#)

[Six Pack](#)

[Abdominal Detail](#)

[Explosive Core Strength](#)

[Lower Abs](#)

[Swiss Ball Only](#)

[Combat and Contact Sports](#)

[Serratus Builders](#)

Core Strength

Core Strength Workout #1

Cable Gripping Trunks Twists - powerful movement	3 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Swiss Ball Roll-Ups	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Pushdowns to the Floor	2 sets - 8 to 10 reps

Core Strength Workout #2

Curl Squats - any version	3 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Small Ball Crunches	2 sets - 10 to 15 reps
Ball Side Rolls	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Core Strength Workout #3

Double Cable Pull Crunches , a.k.a. Nilsson Crunches	3 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Dumbbell Side to Sides	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Swiss Ball Leg Raises	2 sets - 8 to 10 reps

Low to No Equipment

No Equipment Workout #1

Abdominal Sit-Ups	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Foot Resisted Crunches	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps
Crunch Roll-Ups	2 sets - 10 to 12 reps

No Equipment Workout #2

Abdominal Sit-Ups	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Declined Body Crunches	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps
Lower Ab Raise Abdominal Sit-Ups	2 sets - 10 to 12 reps

No Equipment Workout #3

Abdominal Sit-Ups	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Side Lying Free Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Lower Ab Raise Abdominal Sit-Ups	2 sets - 10 to 12 reps

No Equipment Workout #4

Abdominal Sit-Ups	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Lying Leg Resistance Raises	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each leg
Ground Push Crunches	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps - squeeze hard

No Equipment Workout #5

Feet on Wall Static Holds	3 sets - as long as you can hold
Side Ab Push-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each side
Foot Resisted Side Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps each side

No Equipment Workout #6 - Advanced

Inverse Crunches (on bench, if possible)	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Side Ab Push-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each side
Momentum Sit-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

No Equipment Workout #7

Pinchy Sit-Ups	3 sets - 8 to 10 reps
Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each side
Side Towel Rows	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each side

No Equipment Workout #8 - Advanced

Towel Cradle Side Crunches	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each side
Crab Walk Leg Raises	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each side
Bridging Supports	2 sets - as long as you can hold

No Equipment Workout #9

Inverse Crunches	3 sets - 8 to 10 reps
Pinchy Sit-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Ground Push Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

No Equipment Workout #10 - Advanced

Side Ab Push-Ups	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps on each side
Bridging Supports	2 sets - as long as you can hold
Inverse Crunches	3 sets - 8 to 10 reps

Waist Minimizers

Waist Minimizer #1

Cable Gripping Trunks Twists - controlled movement	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Forearm Supported Leg Raises	2 sets - 10 to 12 reps
Trunk Twists With a Twist	1 set - 20 to 30+ reps

Waist Minimizer #2

Cable Gripping Trunks Twists - controlled movement	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls	2 sets - 10 to 12 reps each side
Bench Press Leg Raises	2 sets - 10 to 12 reps

Six Pack

Six Pack Workout #1

Abdominal Sit-Ups	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Decline Cable Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Crunch Roll-Ups	2 sets - 10 to 12 reps

Six Pack Workout #2

Stiff-Arm Cable Crunches	2 sets - 8 to 10 reps
Low Pulley Preacher Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Cross Bench Crunches	2 sets - 8 to 10 reps

Six Pack Workout #3

Bench End Cable Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Low Pulley Preacher Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Pushdowns to the Floor	2 sets - 8 to 12 reps

Six Pack Workout #4

Inverse Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Leg Press Push Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Ground Push Crunches	2 sets - 8 to 12 reps

Six Pack Workout #5

Drawn and Quartered	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Leg Press Push Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Cross Bench Crunches	2 sets - 8 to 10 reps

Six Pack Workout #6

Drawn and Quartered	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Low Pulley Preacher Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Small Ball Crunches	2 sets - 8 to 10 reps

Abdominal Detail

Abdominal Detail Workout #1

Pushdowns to the Floor	2 sets - 8 to 12 reps
Foot Resisted Crunches	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps
Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Abdominal Detail Workout #2

Drawn and Quartered - maximum contraction version	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Ground Push Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Explosive Core Strength

Explosive Core Strength Workout #1

Cable Gripping Trunk Twists - powerful version	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Curl Squats	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Abdominal Push-Pulls	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Explosive Core Strength Workout #2

Abdominal Push-Pulls	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps
One Arm Hanging Leg Raises	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Leg Curl Machine Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Explosive Core Strength Workout #3

Drawn and Quartered - powerful version	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Curl Squats	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Momentum Sit-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Explosive Core Strength Workout #4

Abdominal Push-Pulls	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Bench Press Crunches - set bar down each rep	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps
Abdominal Sit-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Lower Abs

Lower Ab Workout #1

Bench End Cable Crunch Leg Raises	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Forearm Supported Leg Raises	3 sets - 8 to 12 reps
High Pulley Lying Crunches	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps

Lower Ab Workout #2

Forearm Supported Leg Raises	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Swiss Ball Leg Raises	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Seated Hanging Leg Raises	2 sets - 8 to 10 reps

Lower Ab Workout #3

Bench Press Leg Raises	3 sets - 8 to 12 reps
Crab Walk Leg Raises	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps each side
High Pulley Lying Crunches	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps

Lower Ab Workout #4

Swiss Ball Leg Raises	3 sets - 8 to 12 reps
Lying Leg Resistance Raises	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps each side
Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps

Swiss Ball Only

Swiss Ball Workout #1

Ball Roll-Ins - 2 Ball or EZ Bar	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Ball Side Rolls	2 sets - 8 to 12 reps
Swiss Ball Roll-Ups	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps

Swiss Ball Workout #2

Swiss Ball Leg Raises	3 sets - 8 to 10 reps
Ball Side Rolls	3 sets - 8 to 12 reps
Seated Swiss Ball Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps

Swiss Ball Workout #3 - With Dumbbells

Two Dumbbell Ball Twists	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Ball Pullover Crunch Supports	2 sets - 8 to 12 reps
Ball Arm Scissors	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps

Combat and Contact Sports

Combat and Contact Sports Workout #1

Combat Crunches	3 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Partner Resisted Crunches	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Double Cable Pull Crunches, a.k.a. Nilsson Crunches	2 sets - 4 to 6 reps

Combat and Contact Sports Workout #1

Combat Crunches	3 sets - 8 to 12 reps
Cable Gripping Trunk Twists	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps each side
Barbell Baton Twirling	2 sets - 4 to 6 rotations each way

Serratus Builders

Serratus Builder #1

Shellberg Serratus	2 sets - 10 to 20 reps
Serratus Pulldowns	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Serratus Crunches	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps

Serratus Builder #2

Serratus Dips	2 sets - 10 to 20 reps
Serratus Pull-Ups	2 sets - 6 to 8 reps
Serratus Crunches	2 sets - 12 to 15 reps

Note: The information found in this program does not constitute medical advice and should not be taken as such.

Consult your physician before taking part in any exercise program.

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Cable Gripping Trunk Twists

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This trunk rotation exercise not only places the regular tension of the cable trunk rotation on the abs, but by gripping the cable partway through the exercise, it adds another element of tension to it, doubling its effectiveness.

How To Do It

This is a variation of an exercise you may already be familiar with. The exercise this variation is based on is commonly known as a "Cable Torso Rotation." This variation takes this basic concept and adds a unique twist that literally doubles the effectiveness of the exercise.

This movement is done on a cable machine. If you have access to a machine that has an adjustable height pulley, this is the best option. If not, it will also work on either a high or low pulley. The movement itself is exactly the same regardless of where you pull from. I will go into more detail about how to do the low and high pulley versions in the "Tricks" section below.

Set the pulley to about bellybutton height (or use either the high or low pulley) and attach a single cable handle to it. Use a fairly light weight to start so that you get an idea of how the movement is performed and what resistance you'll need.

Stand perpendicular to the pulley with your left side towards the pulley. Grasp the handle with your right hand and take a step to the right. Plant your feet a little wider than shoulder width apart and get ready to rotate. The movement itself is very similar to a baseball swing, making it a very effective sports-training movement not only for baseball but for any sport that requires a powerful transfer of force from lower body to upper body.

At the start of the movement, your right arm will be held across your chest with your left arm at your side. Initiate the movement by rotating



your torso to the right. Be sure to keep your elbow slightly bent and locked into position. If you allow the elbow to bend, you will turn the movement into a side row, lessening the effect on the obliques. Keep that arm stiff and fairly straight!

When you start this rotation, begin bringing the cable around in front of your body by pulling on the cable handle with your right arm. Your right arm will come away from your body as you rotate, placing more torque on the obliques.

Here comes the trick that doubles the workload on the abs...

As you start to approach the midpoint of the rotation (though you can also do this more towards the beginning of the movement very effectively as well), grasp the CABLE about 6 inches from the cable clip with your left hand. Do not grasp the handle itself with the left hand - it's important that you wrap your left hand around the actual cable for this to work. Read on...

In a normal cable rotation exercise, after you go past the halfway point of the rotation, the tension on the abs will start decreasing. The peak tension is at the halfway point. We're going to fix that!



Once you've passed the halfway point of the rotation, continue pulling the handle with your right hand but now start **PUSHING** forward and away from your body on the cable itself with your left hand. As a visual, think of the string games that kids play such as the Cat's Cradle.

What you're essentially doing is creating a new fulcrum for the tension of the cable to go through. Instead of losing some tension around the arc as you normally would, you now have direct tension on the abs again and in a different way than in the regular rotation exercise. This not only works the obliques on the pulling side with the pulling motion, it also works the obliques on the pushing side with a strong pushing motion.

The effect on the abs with this double movement is tremendous! The next day you should have a very strong feeling of tightness (and possibly soreness) in the upper/side ab area.

Common Errors

1. Not pushing forward with the hand gripping on the cable itself

It's **CRITICAL** with this exercise to push forward as you come around the midpoint of the exercise. This push is what adds the tension to the other side of the abs and makes this a more complete core movement. First, the one side pulls then the exercise smoothly transitions with the other side also pushing.

2. Not using enough weight

If you find you're easily completing each rep without feeling a strong tightness in your abdominal area, you are most likely not using enough weight. This exercise should not be easy to perform.

3. Using too much momentum in a bad way

As I'll explain in the "Tricks" section below, using some momentum in a targeted fashion can actually increase the power and effectiveness of this exercise. The only time momentum can be bad is if you use it with too light of weight and it then takes the tension off the core muscles, making the exercise less effective.

Tricks

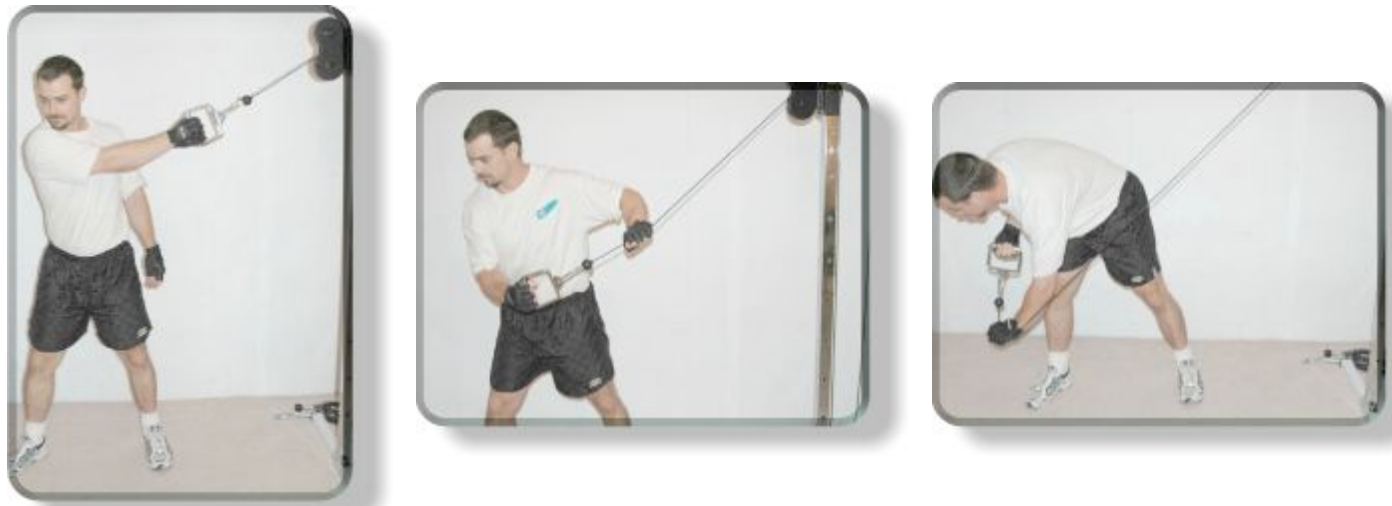
1. Don't be shy to use power and momentum with this one

After working this exercise for awhile and building up your core rotational strength with it, don't be shy to step powerfully into this exercise like a strong baseball swing to be able to use the most weight possible. This exercise doesn't need to be a delicate, carefully-controlled movement - the body can handle this force when you build up to it. Take the golf swing, baseball swing and hockey slapshot as examples of this. You can build tremendous power and rotational stabilizing strength this way and get your body used to rotating with powerful force.

To do this, start in a standing position, fairly close to the weight stack. Grip the handle in one hand and be ready to grip right away on the cable with the other - you can grip pretty much as soon as you start the movement when you're using heavier weight. Take a big step to the side then throw your bodyweight to the side, taking the weight with it. Explode with your rotation, gripping the cable right away and rotating as powerfully as you can. Don't lower it so it's completely out of control, but you also don't need to worry about focusing too much on the negative (lowering phase) of this movement. The real power of the exercise is in the explosiveness at the beginning and through the middle, not on the way down.

2. High pulley cable gripping trunk rotations

If you don't have access to a pulley that is adjustable in height, using the high pulley is an option. Even if you do have an adjustable pulley, you can definitely benefit from doing this exercise from a high pulley. It will hit the muscles in a different fashion than simply doing the exercise with the cable at waist level (which is a more direct line of pull for the midsection muscles). The execution is basically the same, however it does transform the exercise into more of a crunching movement along with the rotational aspect of it. As you come down and around, push down towards the floor with the hand that is gripping on the cable. This will really hit the upper side abdominal area hard.



3. Low pulley cable gripping trunk rotations

As with the high pulley version, this version is effective even if you do have an adjustable-height pulley. With the high pulley, the

exercise is more of a crunch/pulling movement. With the low pulley version, the exercise is more similar to a lateral raise/pushing movement, which really hits the muscles in a different way. You will find that it even works your shoulders somewhat as you do it.



[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) • [One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#) • [Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Swiss Ball Side Rolls

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise allows you to place very good rotational torsion on the abs. By moving from side to side over the ball, the abs are forced to strongly contract in order to keep you from rolling off.

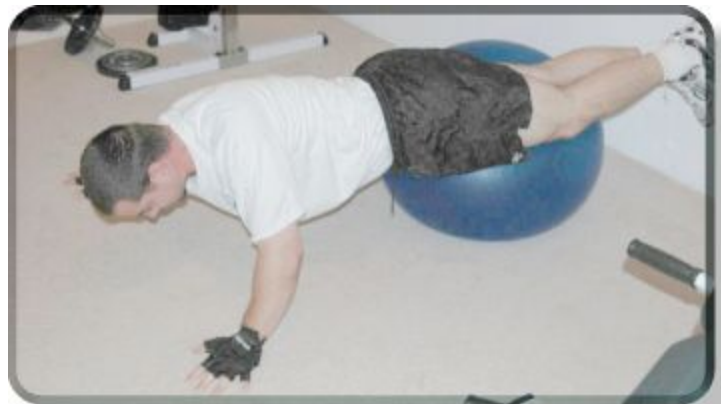
How To Do It

To get into position for this movement, stand directly in front of the ball. Lay forward on the ball, placing your hands on the ground, then roll forward until only your thighs are on the ball. When your thighs are on, set your hands out wide to provide the maximum base of support for the exercise.

Now roll the ball to one side so that the thighs roll down one side of the ball. When doing this, only the side of the one thigh stays on the ball - try to keep the plane of your body horizontal.

Tighten up the abs hard, feeling for the stretch and tension in the side abs. Now use that tension to roll the ball back in the other direction, over the top and then down to the other side. Follow this pattern and repeat back and forth from side to side.

This exercise can also be done with your knees tucked in towards your chest with your shins on the ball instead of the thighs. This greatly increases the torque on the abs and increases the challenge of the exercise and its effects on your abs.





Common Errors

1. Placing your hands too close together on the ground

If your hands are too close, you will not be able to properly apply torque to the abs and even hold yourself on the ball, much less go back in the other direction over the ball. Set your hands out quite wide so that you're able to apply this torque effectively.

2. Moving too fast

This exercise requires control, feeling for the stretch and the tension in the abs as you move from side to side on the ball. If you allow momentum to take over and start rolling the ball quickly, you risk not only falling off the ball but injury to the lower back area so keep it slow and steady, squeezing hard to change direction, and you'll be just fine.

3. Allowing the body to rotate around as you roll down the side of the ball

It's very important with this exercise not to let the body rotate around the ball. When you roll to the side, you want to keep the body horizontal with only the side of the one thigh staying on the ball. If you keep the thighs on the ball, it decreases the torsion effect of the exercise on the side abs, reducing the effectiveness of the exercise.

Tricks

1. Do it on your shins

As I mentioned above, you can roll up onto your shins and do this exercise with your knees closer to your chest. This increases the torsion of the exercise and increases the resistance on the abs.



2. Do a ball roll-in in between reps

To provide a more complete ab workout, in between rolling to each side, you can also roll the ball forward, bringing your knees up into your chest. Roll it back down and roll down to the other side.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Two Dumbbell Ball Twists

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Using only a Swiss Ball and two dumbbells, you can achieve an extraordinary ab-tightening contraction around the entire midsection musculature. This exercise places a great stretch on the obliques along with great tension, forcing quick abdominal development.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need two dumbbells and a Swiss Ball (I will also tell you how to do the exercise on a regular flat bench in the Tricks section below). A smaller-size ball is better for this exercise though any ball will work.

Lay on your back with your knees bent and your feet fairly wide apart - you'll need a good base of support for this exercise so that you don't roll off to the side of the ball. Hold two equal-weight dumbbells at arms-length directly above you. Press them together while doing this exercise (if they're separated, they'll move around more, making the exercise less efficient). Start with fairly light dumbbells the first time you try this movement.

Now, keeping your head facing directly up/forwards and your hips horizontal, lower both of the dumbbells slowly and under complete control down to the left. Hold your breath and tighten up your midsection as you come down to the fully-twisted position. Prepare to push hard against the ground with your left foot to maintain your balance.

Your left arm is going to bend to about 90 degrees at the elbow as you lower the dumbbells to the side while your right arm should stay perfectly straight. Your upper body should stay in the same position on the ball - no rolling to the opposite side to



compensate for the weight to the side. This torque is what makes the exercise so valuable. Bending your lower arm is critical to keeping your torso in the same position on the ball.

Since you're using two separate dumbbells, it's going to create a very different stress on the entire abdominal area than anything you've experienced before.

When you're at the bottom, your upper left arm will be contacting the surface of the ball (don't let it rest or lose tension at this point!). Reverse the direction by simultaneously pulling with your right side abs and pushing with your left side abs. The right arm movement is similar to a rear delt lateral while the left arm movement is similar to a dumbbell press.

Remember to keep the dumbbells pressed together tightly! The opposing tension in the abs really puts a lot of torque across the whole area. Be very sure you're not just pushing with the bottom arm but also pulling with the top arm.

Be sure not to bounce out of the bottom, but try to feel a stretch in the right side as you start the change of direction.

If you have any lower back pain issues, this exercise does put some stress on the lower back. If you do try it, go very light and take it very slowly.



Note the bend in the left arm at the bottom



Common Errors

1. Separating the dumbbells

Keep them pressed together throughout the movement. If they separate, they're harder to control and it disperses the tension on the abs.

2. Rolling around on the ball

For best results, be sure to keep yourself as stationary as possible on the ball. If you roll to the side, it takes some of the torque off the abs and it won't hit the abs as strongly.

3. Moving too quickly

This is NOT a ballistic exercise - there should be no bouncing or fast movements involved. Lower the dumbbells slowly to the sides and change direction very deliberately by using muscle power, not bouncing.

Tricks

1. Changing the arc

You can bring the dumbbells down at various angles to the torso to change where the exercise hits your abs. By bringing it down higher up beside your head, you'll hit the upper areas of your obliques. By bringing it down towards your hip, you'll hit the lower areas of your obliques. Just remember to always keep your head looking straight up and set your feet wide apart for the best base of support.

2. How to use a flat bench instead

You can also do this exercise on a flat bench instead of a ball, if you don't have access to a ball or prefer a more solid surface to work on. Instead of lying flat on the bench as you normally would for a bench press, you'll be resting only your upper back on the end of the bench.

To get into this position, sit on the very end of the bench. Now move your butt off the bench and squat down in front of it. Lean back and place your upper back on the bench end. Keep your hips down and set your feet fairly wide apart.

This is the position you should maintain while doing the exercise. The bench is a more solid surface but it is just as effective for the exercise. One major difference is that there won't be any surface to contact the upper arm of the bottom arm as you lower the weight down. Keep an eye on how far down you go to the side. All the other techniques still apply.



3. When using heavier weight...

- You can shift your upper body somewhat to the other side of the ball. If you're using a heavy weight, you'll need to do that in order to stay on the ball. The increased resistance will make up for it.
- Be extra careful the dumbbells don't separate. It'll be much harder to control heavier dumbbells if they do.
- As you rotate back up, exhale through pursed lips to keep stability in your abs as you let air out and so that you don't pass out.
- Push VERY hard with the same side leg as the weight is on. You'll need all the help you can get.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Arms Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise allows you to place direct tension on the upper oblique area to the sides of the upper abs where the obliques form the "fingers" that truly finish a physique.

How To Do It



Start by attaching two single handles to the high pulleys of the crossover machine. You will be using a moderately heavy weight for the exercise itself but you can start light to get an idea of the movement first.

Grasping the two handles, kneel down then walk a few steps forward on your knees. As you kneel down, you will need to rotate your shoulders so that your arms are being stretched behind your back (your palms will be facing up in this position). The reason you want to step forward a bit is to get a better stretch on the obliques.

From this position, you can perform one of three movements: a cable crunch straight forward, a side crunch to the left or a side crunch to the right. The angle of the cables forms a direct line of pull for the obliques on the opposing side of the body, e.g. when you side crunch to the left, the right pulley has a direct line of pull on the left obliques.



I've found that a good way to execute this exercise is to cycle between the three movements during the set - do one crunch to the front, one to the left, one to the front, one to the right, one to the front, one back to the left, etc. This will give you a balanced workload on the abs. You can also choose to just focus on the obliques by going back and forth between the two sides.

The unique angle of tension from this exercise will really place demands on the abs in a way that they're not used to.

Common Errors

1. Not setting yourself forward

To get the best angle of pull on the obliques, it's better to move yourself forward so that you're not directly in between the two pulley stacks. If you're directly between the two stacks, you won't get a good stretch on the obliques.

2. Incorrect arm placement

When doing the exercise, your arms should be rotated around and pointing backwards (the position the arms are in is just like how you swing your arms back when you're about to do a standing broad jump). If the arms are held like you're doing a cable cross-over, the movement won't target the abs but will most likely just overstretch the chest.

3. Not squeezing at the bottom of the movement

Much of the benefit of the exercise happens when you've fully contracted the abs and twisted around to the side. Hold that point for a few seconds and squeeze the obliques hard.

Tricks

1. Arch your back at the start

As with any crunching movement, the abs will get a more effective stretch if you have an arch in your lower back. Keep your upper body angled down but be sure to start with an arch in your lower back to get that extra stretch. Start the movement by pulling with your abs, then curl the trunk over, and round the back over, for full flexion.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

One Knee Cable Crunch

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The execution of this exercise is very simple and easy to do without error. The whole effect comes from how you position your body when doing the cable crunch.

This variation of the cable crunch hits the side abs without the need to do any twisting type of movement, making it a good choice for those who may have lower back issues. All the tension on the side abs happens due to the position of your body during the crunch, not from twisting.

How To Do It

This exercise is done using the high pulley and a regular bar attachment. Kneel down on one knee right in front of the high pulley, like you're in the bottom of the lunge position. Now grasp the bar with a palms-facing-you (supinated) grip, hands about 8 to 12 inches apart, and pull it down so that it's right behind your head. At the start of the movement, you should have a slight arch in your lower back in order to maximize the range of motion for the abs.

Do a cable crunch from there, pulling the bar down as you crunch over. Start the movement by pivoting from the lower rib cage area, not by bending in half at the waist. By starting the movement higher up on your midsection, you will activate the abdominal muscles more effectively. As you get about halfway down with the rib cage bent, start bending at the waist and double over to complete the movement. This makes a big difference in the effectiveness of the cable crunch.

Squeeze hard against the resistance, feeling for the tension going through the side that has the knee up.



Switch legs to hit the other side of your abs. This knee position changes the dynamic of the exercise, allowing you to focus on the side abs without twisting, just as you would normally do with a cable crunch to hit the side abs.

Common Errors

1. Yanking the bar down

As with any cable crunch, you don't want to use excessive momentum to start or complete the movement, which decreases the tension on the abs. This defeats the major goal of the exercise, which is to increase the tension on the abs.

2. Not squeezing at the bottom

Since the goal is tension and contraction, make an effort to hold and squeeze the abs at the bottom of the movement. This will give your abs extra tension.

Tricks

1. Bend at the rib cage first

As mentioned above, start the cable crunch movement with a slightly arched back, bending first at the lower rib cage, going down about halfway through the movement and then bending at the waist. Most people do the cable crunch by bending at the waist right from the start. You'll notice a difference in how the exercise feels when you start by bringing the rib cage closer to the pelvis, which is the primary function of the rectus abdominus (the six-pack area). It will give you a stronger contraction in the abdominal area.

2. Use mental focus

Even though just your body position will activate the side abs without twisting, try to consciously focus on contracting the side that has the knee up. This mind-in-the-muscle connection will strongly activate the target muscles.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Serratus/Intercostal Crunches

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise allows you to focus on the hard-to-isolate Serratus Anterior muscles, developing that finger-like look in the upper side-ab area. It also works the Intercostal muscles between your ribs.

How To Do It

This exercise is done using the high pulley and a single handle attachment. Use a light to moderate weight to start this exercise. It's more about feel than it is about using heavy weight. The Serratus muscles can be hard to isolate and feel working - it's easy for the larger muscles like the lats to take over with this particular movement if you go too heavy.

Stand facing away from the pulley. Reach behind and grab the handle up behind your head. Your arm position is similar to the bottom position of an overhead dumbbell extension. I would highly

recommend placing a hand over your Serratus area (which is just to the side and below the pectoral muscle) during the exercise so that you can feel the exercise working. This exercise also works the Intercostal muscles, located in between your ribs. These will activate automatically during the exercise and don't need special attention.

Take a deep breath to expand the rib cage (this improves the pull of the Serratus muscles) just before starting the crunch and hold it while you're doing the crunch (it's a light exercise and won't cause blood pressure problems, unless you've already got blood pressure problems).

Crunch a few inches forward and bring your elbow and thus the cable handle forward and down and around as you do the small crunching movement. It's not a large range of motion, but since the focus is on the Serratus, you don't need a large range to be effective. Feel for the Serratus muscles to pop up a little when you do the crunch - that's when you know you've hit the groove.

Do your full set, then repeat on the other side. This is not an exercise that you'll really be able to know that you've taken the Serratus muscles to failure, like the type of failure where you can't do another rep of the bench press. The best indication is that you no longer feel the Serratus muscles pop up and your lats start to take over the movement.



Common Errors

1. Using too much weight

Too much weight will cause the lats to take over. Keep it moderate and go for feel, not massive resistance.

2. Going too fast

Any sort of momentum will render this exercise useless for building the Serratus. Keep it slow and feel for the tension.

Tricks

1. Place a hand on

Setting your hand on your Serratus muscle area while you're working it (it's just below and to the side of the pectoral muscle) will help you to feel this exercise working and help you find the groove to do it effectively.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Serratus Pulldowns

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



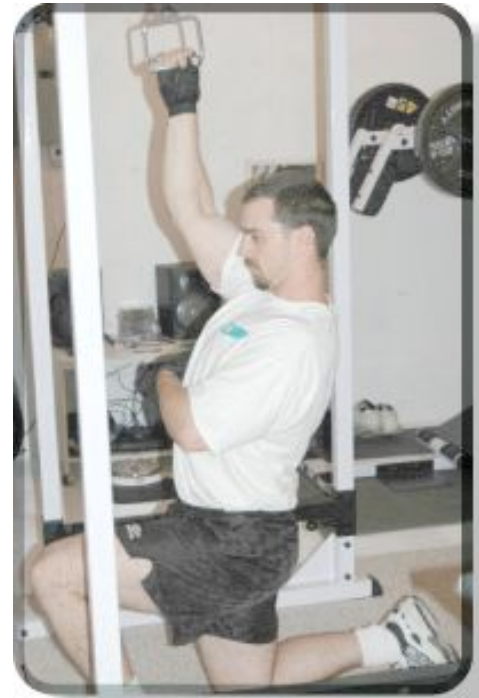
Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The **serratus anterior** muscles are the little tooth-like ridges that sit between your side abs and your lats, beside your pecs. They are generally not very visible until you have a fairly low level of body fat unless the serratus are very large.

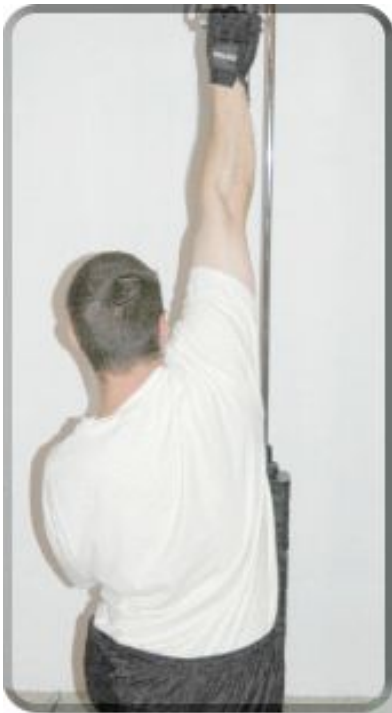
This exercise is one of the few exercises that directly targets the serratus muscles. Building these small muscles up can have a dramatic impact on the look of your midsection.

How To Do It

- Kneel on one leg in front of a high pulley and grasp a handle (you will be doing these one arm at a time).
- Move away from the pulley to the side a little so that you pull down at an angle inward (e.g. if you are using your right arm, move a few inches to the left).
- Put your other hand over your serratus muscle while doing the exercise to make sure it is being worked and to develop a feel for how doing the movement affects the muscle. This will help you work it more efficiently as this muscle is difficult to isolate.
- Pull your shoulder down as far you can without bending your arm. You should be arching your back somewhat during the movement.



- The pull should come from the serratus muscle; you must concentrate to ensure that the lats are relaxed or they will take over the movement. For this reason, you shouldn't use a lot of weight until you've learned how to isolate the muscles.
- As you get to the bottom of the shoulder-drop, rotate your hand pinky-side inward a little to fully activate the serratus. This movement is an external rotation at the shoulder. Your elbow will come in toward the midline of the body.
- Do not grip the handle strongly during the movement as this will tend to activate the lats. Keep your grip fairly loose but not so loose that the weight slips out of your hand.
- This exercise requires a lot of practice and experimentation to find the groove that works best for you. Always keep your other hand on the serratus muscle so that you can feel for the proper activation of the muscle.



Place your mouse over this image to view the movement in action.

Common Errors

1. Not feeling the muscle working

You will not get any results whatsoever by just going through the motions with this exercise. You MUST feel the muscle working.

2. Using too much or not enough weight

Using too much weight will reduce your ability to feel the muscle working. Not using enough weight will not work the muscle enough to see any results.

3. Going too fast

With this exercise, the slower you go, the better you will feel the exercise. Going too fast will use primarily momentum and the lats will take over. Go slow and feel it.

Tricks

1. Using a towel

If you are doing serratus pulldowns on a pulldown machine that does not have a proper single-hand handle (such as a high pulley that has an unremoveable lat bar), loop a towel around the part where the bar connects to the cable. Grasp both ends of the towel near the top and go from there.

2. Inhale on the way down

To increase the effectiveness of the movement, inhale as you pull the weight down. This will expand your rib cage and help to isolate the serratus muscles.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs 	Lower Abs 
Rotational/Obliques 	Total Ab Exercises 
Exercise Update #1 	Extra Topics 

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Standing Barbell Side to Sides

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise places excellent rotational tension on the muscles of the abdominal area, building stability and rotational strength throughout the area.

How To Do It

Place one end of a barbell against something on the floor, such as the corner of a weight machine or plate tree (even just against a wall will work fine). This keeps the bar end from shifting around as you're doing the exercise. You'll basically be working with the bar as a lever.

You can start doing this exercise with only the bar for resistance or you can add a plate to the top end as you get stronger with it. Lift the other end of the bar and stand facing it. The bar should be held at approximately chest level.

Hold your arms slightly bent with your knees slightly bent. Lower the bar down to one side, rotating at the waist. Keep your head facing forward throughout the movement to get the best feel on the abs. Feel for a good stretch but don't allow the back to rotate too much or you could lose your balance.

Hold your breath briefly on the way down to help stabilize your core area and exhale as you start to push back up. Change direction slowly and deliberately, without bouncing or jerking, and bring the barbell around to the other side.



Common Errors

1. Going too fast

This exercise places the back in a position where moving too fast can compromise it. If you have back trouble, do not perform this exercise. If you don't, be sure to move slowly, especially as you're lowering the barbell down and changing direction.

2. Holding the barbell in the wrong place

If you hold the barbell too high or too low in relation to your body, it can place some awkward stress on your back and core. As mentioned above, keep it around chest level for best results.

Tricks

1. Put your mind in the muscle

When you rotate down, consciously squeeze your obliques hard as you change direction. Keep your abs very tight and focus on contracting the abs as if you were wringing out a sponge.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#)

•
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Resting Forearm Cable Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise literally FORCES the obliques into proper alignment during a cable crunch movement. How you hold the bar while you're doing the exercise hits the obliques without torquing the lower back.

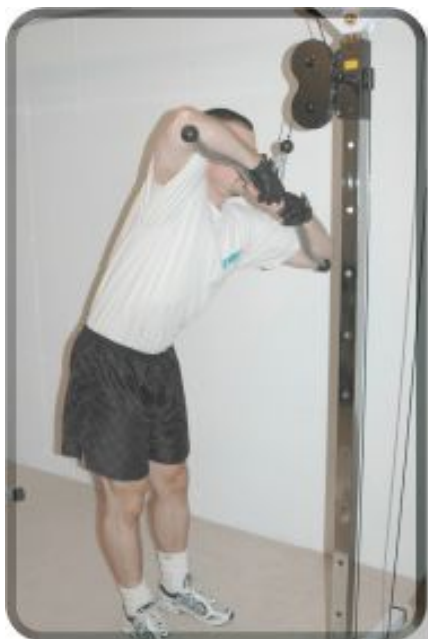
How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need a high pulley and a bar attachment. The attachment can be a straight bar, cambered bar, or even the full lat bar (if that's all you have available). Use a moderate weight on this exercise as you'll be going more for feel rather than brute force.

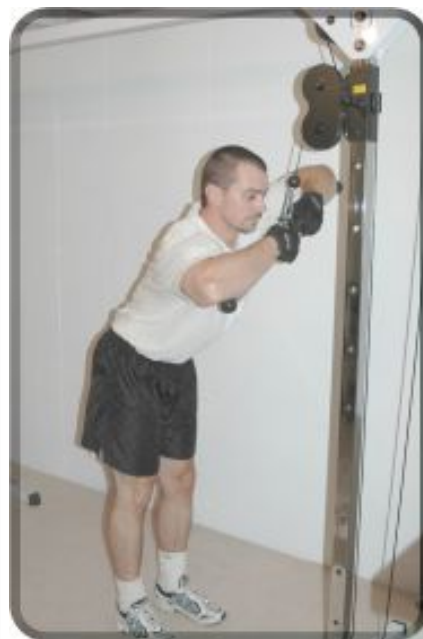
Start by grabbing around the center post of the bar with both hands (like you're strangling it). Now push the bar down a little and set both of your forearms on top of the bar. Your elbows will be wide to the sides and the forearms will be resting completely on the bar. Start with a slight arch in your lower back to maximize support in that area.



Tilt the bar down to the left about 45 degrees. Now do a cable crunch straight down. Because the bar is tilted, the obliques will be forced to do the majority of the work of the crunch. Squeeze the obliques hard then let the bar up slowly. Tilt the bar down to the right and repeat to that side.



Tilting to the Left



Tilting to the Right



Common Errors

1. Not tilting the bar enough

To maximize the effects of this exercise, be sure the bar is tilted about 45 degrees. A smaller tilt will still work but you'll get a great effect on the obliques with the larger tilt.

2. Crunching too fast

It's important to use muscular tension to perform this exercise to fully work the obliques. If you use momentum, the tension won't go to the right area and can lead to potential injury.

3. No arch in the lower back

For best lower back support and best contraction in the obliques, start the movement with a slight arch in the lower back.

Tricks

1. Suck in your gut

Sucking in your gut is a good trick for increasing oblique activation. When you suck in your gut, this relaxes the rectus abdominus (the front six-pack muscles). When those muscles are more relaxed and the tension is already preferentially being directed to the obliques, the obliques will be forced to take up practically all of the tension of the exercise.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Side Lying Free Crunches

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

While most direct oblique exercises, such as side bends, place tension on the obliques in a way that builds the muscle outwards (making the love handle area larger), this exercise forces the obliques to tighten up extremely hard and get smaller rather than building outwards.

How To Do It

This exercise is very simple to perform - the only setup it requires is a wall or other solid object to brace your feet on. You may have seen this exercise with your feet anchored under something or with a person holding the feet down. This version keeps your feet free and unanchored, however, which makes the difference in how the exercise works.

Lie down on your side with your feet against the wall and your knees slightly bent. Be sure you have shoes with good grips on them. The exercise requires your feet to almost "grip" onto the wall, using friction and pressure instead of anchoring as the base of support.

You can hold your arms at your sides (easiest) or, as you get stronger, at your chest or even over your head. You can also have one arm overhead (the same side as you're coming up on) and one arm held in front of you. This is the position that I like to use.



Be sure you have a good grip on the wall with your feet. You will now be attempting to raise your torso directly up to the side in line with your body. Push hard against the wall with your feet and, using the muscles of your side, raise your torso off the floor as high as you can. It could be only an inch or two but even that will give you an extremely hard contraction. As you get stronger, you can go higher.

The reason this exercise doesn't build the obliques outward is because your feet aren't anchored. Instead of your hip acting as the fulcrum or balance point against which your obliques work (which makes it into an exercise very similar to a weighted side bend) and the movement originating right at the hip, the tension starts down at your feet. You are forced to draw your torso up using the tension from your feet that pulls all the way up the side of your leg. When the fulcrum is the hip, you get a more direct angle of pull and the obliques are able to work more directly to pull the torso up. You can go up higher, for sure, but this change eliminates the pulling tension in the legs and puts it into the obliques, which will make them bulge outward as they develop.

You can feel the difference by trying the two different types - anchor your feet (or have someone hold them down) and do a few reps. Now do a few reps without them anchored. With the feet anchored, you can come up higher and you can feel a difference in the type of tension on your obliques compared to this non-anchored version.

Common Errors

1. Anchoring the feet

Don't do it. Very simple. Anchoring the feet changes the exercise, making it more likely to build the obliques outward.

2. Not squeezing the obliques hard

When you get as high as you can go, see if you can hold it there for a few seconds, squeezing the sides hard.

3. Bouncing or exploding off the ground

The key with this exercise is to use a controlled movement. Don't bounce off the ground or try to pop up to get as high as you can. The real benefit of the exercise is the "drawing" up of the sides as you pull the torso off the ground. Range of motion is not all that important. The tension on the obliques is.

4. Not coming up directly to the side

Your torso should only move directly up to the side, not rotating or turning at all. Rotation in this position puts too much pressure on the spine.

Tricks

1. Push your feet in different directions

To maximize the stabilizing and pushing tension you get from your feet, you'll want to exert pressure in opposite directions on the wall. This opposing pressure will help give you a solid base upon which your obliques can work. Your top foot should try to push backwards while your bottom foot tries to push forwards. This is why you should keep your knees slightly bent while doing this exercise - bending the knees gives you the ability to exert this shearing force.

2. Breathe in as you come up

As you bring up the torso, take a sharp breath in and hold it at the top. This helps the proper muscles to activate. Holding it at the top keeps your core



area stable and increases the contraction you can get with the obliques. Don't hold it for too long though, and if you're not comfortable holding it, then just don't hold it at the top.

3. Spot yourself with your elbow

When doing the exercise, to spot yourself when it gets difficult or to simply be able to get yourself up higher, push yourself up using the elbow of the arm that's closest to the ground. It's a very natural movement and easy to do. You can really help push yourself hard with it.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

These two exercises directly target the function of the Serratus Anterior muscles, which is to pull the shoulder blades down and forward. One is done from a pushing perspective, the other from a pulling perspective.

How To Do It

Serratus Dips

This exercise is simple to visualize and set up. All you will need is a place to dip. This could be a dipping station, railings, two chairs or two Olympic bars set across the rails of a power rack.

Do this exercise without added weight first, just to get an idea of how it's done. First, get in the top position of the tricep dip. Your body should be vertical and your arms locked out.

Now, instead of bending at the elbows, let your body sink down at the shoulders. Don't sink down as far as you can - just enough so that you're dipping down a little. Your shoulders will shrug up as you lower down.

Be absolutely sure to keep tension in the shoulder joints. If you release the tension (especially if you drop too far down), it will put stress on the shoulder joints. Now, keeping your arms locked out straight, push yourself back up by pushing the shoulders down. Push up as high as you can go. Lower yourself down slowly and repeat.



Note the level of the head compared to the pipes in the pictures to the right. This shows how the movement occurs only at the shoulders, raising the body several inches.

If you have shoulder trouble or if you've ever separated your shoulder, don't do this exercise! With a normal, healthy shoulder and done properly, this exercise is fine (my shoulders are not great and I have no trouble with this exercise even with heavy weight). If the shoulder has been previously injured, the direct tension to the area may cause pain.



This exercise lends itself to the use of heavy weight. If you're at a point where you're able to do 5 or 6 full reps of the full bodyweight dip on your own, you can add extra weight to this exercise.

Add weight to a dipping belt (or place a dumbbell between your feet) and get yourself into the top position. Be even more careful about keeping tension in your shoulder joints when using extra weight. Lower yourself down at the shoulders then push up with the extra resistance. If you're using enough weight, you'll probably find your triceps get a good workout just supporting this weight during the movement.

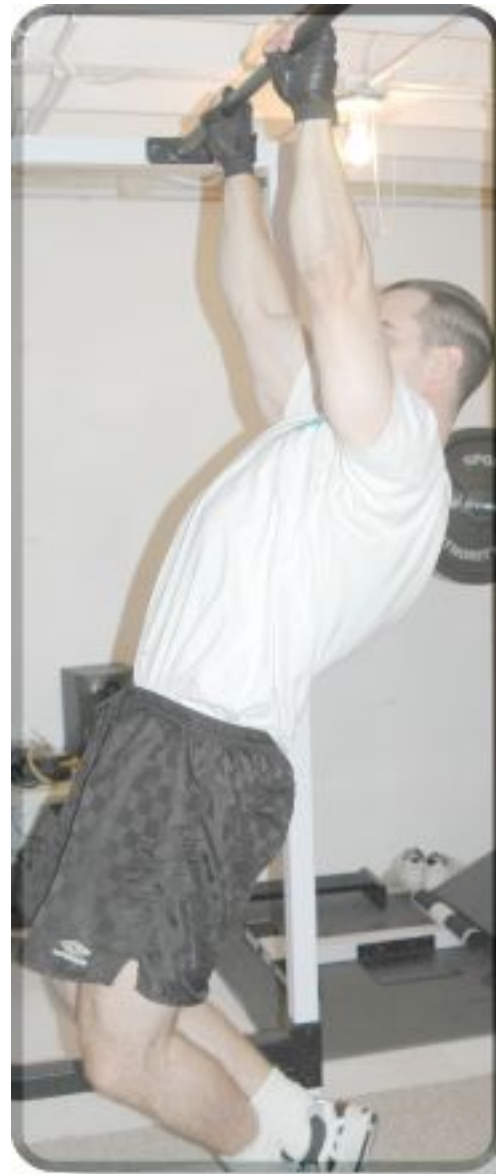
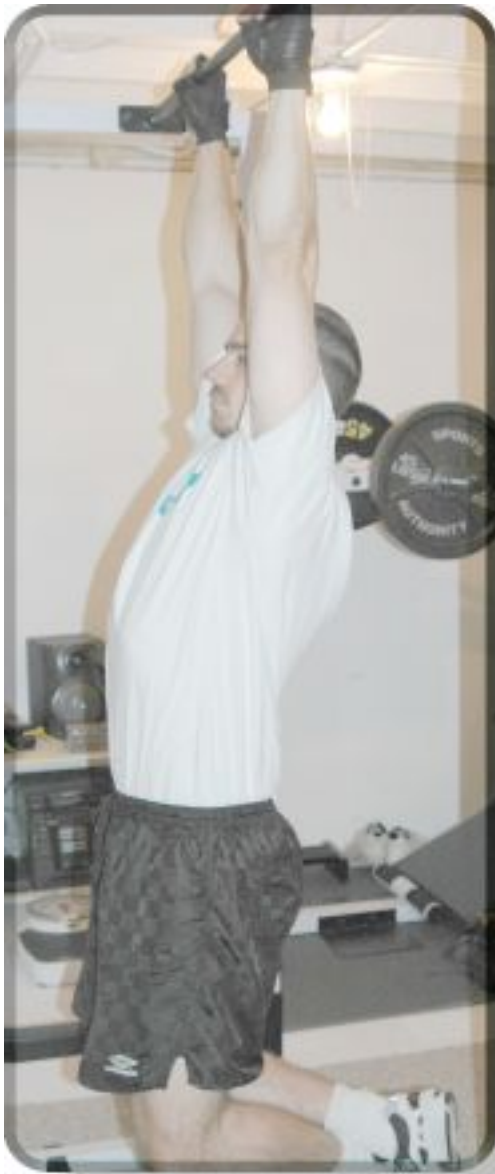
To view the exercise in action, place your mouse over top of the picture to the left.

Serratus Pull-Ups

This exercise is very similar to the Serratus Dip concept but using a pull-up style instead. This hits different fibers of the Serratus muscles. It also helps to define and build the extreme lower "shelf" of the latissimus dorsi muscles of the back, which also contribute to the movement.

Hang from the pull-up bar with arms completely straight and shoulders down, with a palms-forward grip on the bar a little beyond shoulder-width apart. Without bending the elbows, raise your shoulder girdle up. While raising the shoulder girdle, imagine as if you're trying to push your rib cage up towards the bar without bending the elbows.

Do this exercise for high reps, if you're just using bodyweight. You can also, like the Serratus Dips, add weight by using a dip belt or a dumbbell between the feet.



Common Errors

1. No bouncing

You will not get any results whatsoever by bouncing up and down with either of these exercises. You must feel the muscles working and you should NOT have any momentum going whatsoever. Momentum can be hard on the shoulders when you're in this position.

2. Not using enough weight

Since you have extremely good leverage and the range of motion is very short, adding extra

weight is a very good idea. Don't be afraid to add weight to see how much you can handle with these movements. Just be sure to stay within your limits.

3. Going too fast

With both of these exercises, the slower you go the better you will feel them working and the safer they will be for your shoulders. Go slow and feel it.

4. Lowering too far in the dip

If you drop down too far, you will lose tension on the muscles in the shoulder joints and the connective tissue will have to shoulder the burden, so to speak. Just drop down enough to get a little range of motion. The serratus don't have a large range of motion and the act of pushing up even from a very short distance with heavy weight will be effective.

Tricks

1. Twisting Serratus Dip

As you come up, you can also rotate your body a little around to one side (so that you're almost facing to the side) then the other on the next rep. This will help put a more direct line of pull on the serratus muscles. This technique works better when you are not using maximally heavy weights.

2. Add to regular dips

You can also work this exercise in when doing regular bar dips. At the top of every rep, push up into a Serratus Dip for an extra squeeze on the triceps and to work the Serratus at the same time.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Dumbbell Side-To-Sides

All Training Levels

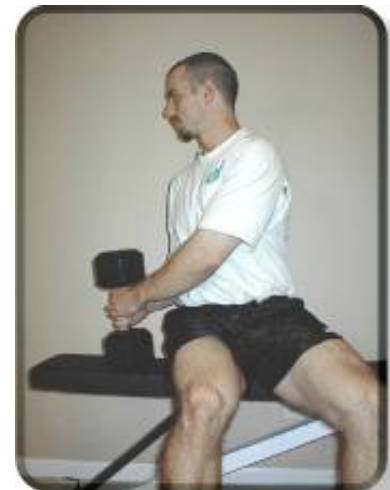
This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Developing the core muscles of your abdomen is essential for optimum lifting and sports performance. This exercise uses resistance and a side-to-side movement to directly work the muscles that are responsible for transferring power through your body.

How To Do It



This exercise is very simple to execute but is extremely effective.

- Start by sitting sideways on a flat bench. Place a dumbbell standing vertically on end on the bench to one side of you. When you first do this exercise, start with a fairly light weight in order to accustom your body to the movement.
- It is important that you keep your upper body vertical and your lower back tight and arched for proper support. Your abs should also remain tight throughout the exercise.

- Rotate your torso around to the side where the dumbbell is resting and pick up the dumbbell with both hands on the handle. Inhale sharply and hold your breath as you rotate around. This will stabilize the core and lower back area.
- After you've picked it up, rotate your body all the way to the other side of the bench, and set the dumbbell down on the bench (it should be standing on end while you continue to hold onto it).
- Be sure to keep your midsection very tight all the way around.
- Hold your breath from the moment you pick up the dumbbell to the moment you set it down. This ensures that you stabilize your abdomen properly.
- Repeat the lift and rotate movement back to the other side.

It is important to note that you should always set the dumbbell down on the bench in between reps and relax your abdominal area momentarily. One of the most beneficial aspects of this exercise is the moment when you pick up the weight from the bench. If you utilize a continuous movement, you will decrease the benefits of the exercise.

Common Errors

1. Relaxing the abdomen

This will compromise the stability of your lower back and could potentially lead to injury. Be absolutely sure to keep your abdominal area tight throughout the entire rotation.

2. Hunching over

Make sure you maintain an upright torso position. Hunching over can also lead to lower back strain.

3. Rotating too fast

This exercise should be performed slowly and under complete control at all times. Rotating quickly to the other side could seriously torque the lower back. This ultimately defeats the purpose of the exercise all together, which is placing tension on the rotating and supporting muscles of the midsection.

Tricks

1. Increasing the resistance during the set

The typical way to increase resistance would be to use a bigger dumbbell. There is, however, a way you can adjust the resistance on your abs during the set itself. This is accomplished by simply adjusting where you hold the dumbbell. Holding the dumbbell in close to your body will put the least torque on the muscles. Extending your arms away from your body will increase the torque on your muscles.

2. Kneeling

This exercise can also be done on the floor in a kneeling position. Set the dumbbell on end on the ground immediately beside you. Turn your body, reach down and pick up the dumbbell, then rotate your body around to the other side. The effect of the exercise is essentially the same. Only the angle of pull on your abdominal area is different.



3. The Pause

If you want to make your *rectus abdominus* (the front six-pack ab muscles) scream, try stopping your rotation halfway through the movement. You should be facing forward. Hold the weight out in front of you for as long as you can and then continue the rotation.



4. Hold a barbell plate

For a different kind of resistance or if you don't have a dumbbell to use for this, you can also hold onto a barbell plate. The only limitation then is the size of the barbell plate - you most likely won't want to hold more than one plate at a time.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) • [One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#) • [Dumbbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Trunk Twists With a Twist

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The normal trunk twist is totally ineffective for reducing the love handle area. This version of it actually causes the obliques to squeeze in tighter, teaching them to stay tighter and, in effect, make your waist appear smaller. Want to reduce love handles? Do this exercise.

How To Do It

The traditional way of doing twists is basically useless. It can serve as a bit of a warm-up but does not work your sides. The twist can, however, be used to directly target the lateral obliques (love handle areas) without building them up. This will tighten them up and help reduce the size of your waist.

- Put a bar or stick across your shoulders with your hands over the top and arms stretched out to the sides.
- Now twist your upper body around to the side, only while you are twisting, **keep your head facing straight forward** instead of turning your head along with your torso as you normally would. This is extremely important! If you turn your head, the exercise will be useless!
- Look straight at yourself in the mirror and do not move your head while you twist your torso (for a little extra squeeze you may try to look as much as you can the opposite way).
- Try to squeeze the oblique area (your sides) at the height of the twist, contracting it hard. This will tighten the muscle without building it up, thus diminishing the appearance of your love handles.



The "**Trunk Twist With a Twist**" exercise, which is designed for tightening the love handle area, should be done for higher reps, e.g. 15 to 20+.

Common Errors

1. Going too fast

It is important to slow this exercise down and get a good squeeze on every single turn. If you simply bounce from one stretch to the other, you'll get nothing out of this exercise. The only good part is the contraction.

2. Not squeezing the obliques hard

As in #1, if you don't squeeze, you won't get results. Going through the motions won't do a thing for you.

3. Letting your head turn with your torso

If you turn your head along with your torso, the effect of the exercise will be greatly reduced. If you find that you have a hard time keeping your head forward, try turning it the other way as you turn your torso. This will help to put the squeeze on your sides.

Tricks

1. Raising the knee

To help increase the squeeze on the obliques, as you twist to one side, do a calf raise, raising your knee up towards your opposing hand as it comes around. This increases the contraction on the obliques by helping to shorten the muscle from the other end (below).

2. Breathe in and out

Hold the contraction for a few seconds and breathe in and out, squeezing out all the air you can on each exhalation. This will help get an even tighter contraction in the area.

3. Pull with one hand, push with the other

As you do the twist, push with the far hand and pull with the other for a greater contraction. For example, if you're twisting to the left, pull on the bar with your left hand and push it forward with your right.

4. Suck in your gut

As you come towards the full turn, suck in your gut. This places an even greater contraction on the oblique muscle, tightening it up even further.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#) •
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise puts a good stretch on the uppermost area of the obliques (just below the pecs) then comes down with an extremely strong cross-tension contraction on the obliques on the other side. Both sides of your abs are hit in different ways with one movement.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need a high pulley and a single cable handle. Set a moderately heavy weight on the pulley and stand directly in front of it.

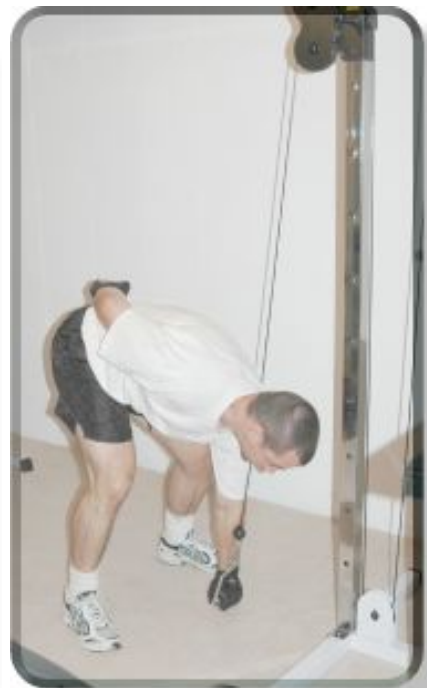
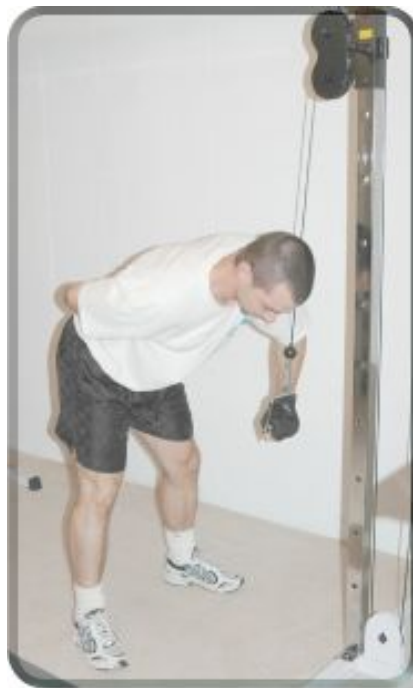
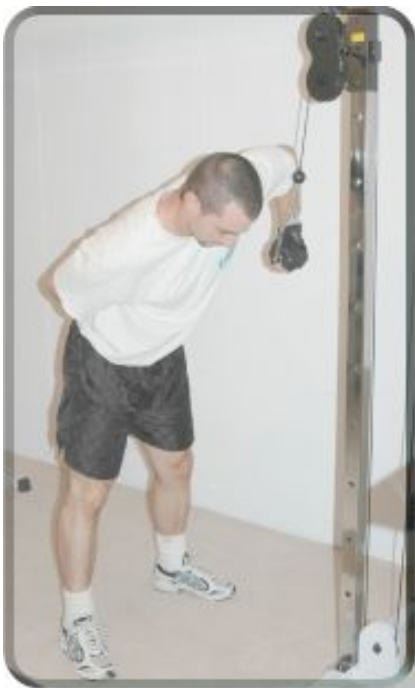
Grasp the pulley, then with the help of your other hand, pull it down a bit and get your arm over top of it. Your elbow will be up in the air and you will be poised to press the handle down to the floor. Your feet should be about shoulder width apart. Be sure to keep your lower back tight with a slight arch at the start.

Let the weight pull up on your arm and feel for the stretch in your upper, side ab area just over the rib cage.

Now, with a powerful movement, press the handle all the way down to the floor (or as far as you can go) pushing **straight down** (no need to come across the body). As you press down, bend over at the waist to be able to get the handle all the way down.

Remember, this is a pressing movement at the arm so as you come down and across, be sure to straighten your arm as though you were doing a bench press type movement. Hold the position at the bottom to maximize the tension.

Let the weight up slowly and under control, bend your elbow as it comes to the top (be sure to keep your arm over top of the handle) then go again.



Common Errors

1. Not using enough weight

Since this is a pressing movement, you can use a fairly heavy weight. This is not a strict crunching movement - your chest and arm are helping move the weight.

2. Twisting too much as you press down

This exercise is not really a twisting movement, more of a diagonal movement. Since the resistance is only in one hand and you're pushing down at an angle, there isn't much actual twisting involved. A little is fine but you shouldn't be rotating much at the spine at all.

Tricks

1. Get a better stretch

To get a better stretch on the abs at the top of the movement, lean into it a little bit. This will help give your upper side abs a bit more work to do at the start.

2. Stand on one leg

If you're the adventurous type and have good balance, you can try performing this exercise while standing on one leg. At the start, stand only on the leg opposite to the hand you're pressing with. It'll take a few seconds to get your balance. Now press the handle down to the ground, keeping your other leg off the ground.

What this does is dramatically increase the stabilizing requirement of the abs while they're being worked with the pressdown movement. You'll get a stronger contraction and the abs will get more overall work. It also helps you learn how to generate force when you've only got one leg on the ground, which is useful in many sports where you're running and jumping and need to exert force in sometimes awkward positions.

[Swiss Ball Side Rolls](#) • [Two Dumbell Ball Twists](#) • [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#) • [Arms-Back Cable Cross-Over Crunches](#)

•
[One Knee Cable Crunches](#) • [Serratus Crunches](#) • [Serratus Pulldowns](#) • [Standing Barbell Side-To-Sides](#)
[Resting Forearm Cable Crunches](#) • [Side Lying Free Crunches](#) • [Serratus Dips and Pull-Ups](#)
[Dumbell Side-To-Sides](#) • [Trunk Twists With a Twist](#) • [Single Arm Press-To-The-Floor](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[**Bonuses**](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Extras

Here are the download links to your valuable bonus items!

Bonus #1: The Creatine Report - by Will Brink (\$19.95 value)

Learn why creatine is the most scientifically-proven sports performance supplement in existence! Will lays out how it works, how to use it and why it's so effective for not only performance but muscle building and more!

[Download now!](#)

Note: this file is a PDF so right-click on the link and choose "Save Target As..." to save it.

Bonus #2: Bodybuilding Recipes - by Will Brink (\$19.95 value)

Having trouble eating healthy? Need some variety in your diet? These great bodybuilding recipes will help keep you eating great and eating tasty.

[Download now!](#)

Note: this file is a PDF so right-click on the link and choose "Save Target As..." to save it.

Bonus #3: How to Cut Through the Hype of Fat Loss Ads and Never Get Ripped Off Again! (\$19.95 value)

In this report, you'll learn exactly how to see through the 12 devious techniques advertisers use to get you to buy their ineffective fat loss products. Some of them are downright sneaky and you'll never even see them coming until it's too late and they're out spending your hard-earned money. Read this and you'll never be cheated again!

[Download now!](#)

Bonus #4: How to Improvise Training Equipment Out of Just About Anything (\$19.95 value)

You'll learn the golden rule of equipment improvisation: it's not garbage until the truck takes it away! Some of the most effective exercises I've ever encountered are done using ordinary household items, furniture and even stuff that's been "rescued" from the kitchen garbage can. I'll teach you what to use and how to use it for best results.

[Download now!](#)

Bonus #5: My Personal Set Of Fitness Calculators (\$29.95 value)

Want to be able to predict your one-rep max simply by punching in a few numbers? Like to know your current bodyfat percentage? Do you need to know how many calories you've burned doing a specific exercise or how many calories you require during the day? You'll find all these calculators and more in this package!

[Download now!](#)

Bonus #6: 50 Questions Answered About Bodybuilding - by Robert DiMaggio (\$19.95 value)

Learn the answers to some of the most frequently answered bodybuilding questions from an expert in the field, including questions about muscle building, fat loss, training technique and much more!

[Download now!](#)

Note: this file is a PDF so right-click on the link and choose "Save Target As..." to save it.

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

***The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of***
BetterU, Inc.

Contact Us

I welcome your comments and questions!

Feedback is extremely important to me. I want to make this book the most valuable resource possible to you and the best way for me to accomplish that is to find out what you think. Let me know what you like about this book, what you don't like, any suggestions you have for improvement or if you just want to vent about how sore you are, that's fine too!

I greatly appreciate positive comments regarding this book. If you submit a positive comment or testimonial and include your name and website, you could get a free link from my site!

Please send an email to me at betteru@fitstep.com and I will get back to you as quickly as possible with a response to your question!

Nick Nilsson

Author of "The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of"

<http://www.fitstep.com>

<http://www.fitness-ebooks.com>

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Swiss Ball Roll-Ups

Advanced

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise targets the lower abs in a very dynamic fashion, forcing them to work not only for movement but for stabilization as well. It's a double-shot that will make your lower abs burn!

The Swiss Ball Roll-Up is done using a decline bench (or decline sit-up bench) and a Swiss ball. By combining the angle with the rolling action of the ball and a pull-in movement, you can strongly target the lower abs with no back stress.

How To Do It

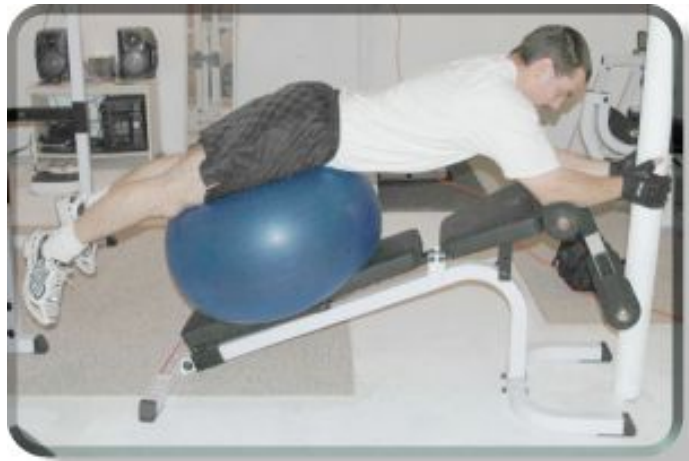
Move the bench in front of something solid, like a rack, machine or solid vertical post. The high end of the bench should be up against the solid object as this is what you'll be holding onto during the exercise. The higher the angle of the bench, the harder this exercise is so when you first try it start with a fairly low angle on the bench.

Place the ball on the bench, about halfway up it. Exactly where you set the ball to start will depend on the bench length and your height. This will take a little trial and error to get comfortable with. When you see how the exercise is done, it will give you a better idea of where you need to place it to start.

Rest your elbows on the knee pads at the top of the bench and grab onto that solid object in front of it. The ball should be contacting your thighs, arms slightly bent, and body straight. The point in time when you set your thighs on the bench and take your feet off the ground is when you'll be most

unstable with this exercise. Hang on tight and set your thighs fairly wide on the ball the first time you do it. This will give you more control over the ball until you get used to the movement and get into position for it.

Now for the work...



Using abdominal power, roll the ball up the decline bench, bringing your knees up into your chest. The ball will roll down your legs as you pull your knees up and in. This results in an extremely strong contraction in the lower abs and abs in general, so squeeze very hard and hold it for a few seconds. You can also bend at the shoulders while doing this exercise. Remember, you're going to be very unstable on the ball while you're doing this exercise so hold on tight! If the ball rolls off the bench, just put it back on and start again.



Common Errors

1. Setting the ball in the wrong place on the bench to start

If the placement of the ball is too far off, you will either not be able to do the movement at all or it will be awkward or too short. Play around with positioning to get a good idea of where to place it. A good technique is to stand at the bottom of the decline bench and hold the ball in front of your thighs. Let your body drop forward while holding the ball so that it lands on the bench with you on top. Now grab hold of the post. This should give you a good indication of where to place it.

2. Placing your thighs too close together on the ball

This makes the exercise more unstable and more difficult. When the thighs are close together, you are less able to use muscle power to maneuver the ball on the bench, making it more likely that the ball will roll off to one side.

3. Not squeezing the abs at the top

The best part of this exercise is the top of the movement where your abs are tight and your knees are up into your chest. Squeeze the abs hard here!

Tricks

1. On your toes

As you roll up and in, try coming up all the way on your toes for maximum difficulty (both in tension on the abs and in difficulty keeping your balance on the ball). Your body will be far more unstable when the surface area contacting the ball is reduced down to only your toes.

2. Side to side

If you've got strong abs, upper body strength and good balance, you can try moving the ball from side to side when you've got it held at the top of the movement. This makes the exercise very tricky and very unstable but it can add a strong contraction to your side abs.

3. Use your forearms to help

Placing your forearms under the ankle pads will make this exercise easier by allowing your lats to help with the movement.



[One Arm Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Forearm Supported Leg Raises](#) • [High Pulley Hook Crunches](#) • [High Pulley Lying Crunches](#)
[Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins](#) • [Seated Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Roll-Ups](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

One Arm Hanging Leg Raises

Advanced



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The One Arm Hanging Leg Raise works very well for two reasons: gripping with one hand increases the instability of the exercise forcing your abdominal and other muscles to work to not only lift your legs, but to also keep your legs stabilized and not swinging around while you're doing the movement. Also, since you're gripping with one arm, the vast majority of the tension goes through the one side of your abs, strongly working the side aspect of the abs, from the top all the way down to the lower abs.

The standard Hanging Leg Raise exercise strongly works the lower abs. This version is executed almost exactly the same but with one major difference: you only grasp the bar with one hand. Naturally, this makes it a more challenging exercise and requires a very strong grip. You need to be strong enough to be able to hang onto the bar long enough that you actually get an abdominal workout out of it.

How To Do It



Stand underneath a chin-up bar, reach up with one hand and grasp the bar strongly. Hold on tight and lift your feet off the ground. Now start doing a leg raise movement.

The easier version of this is to keep your knees bent as much as you can while you do the raise. This reduces the resistance your abs must work against and is a good starting point (this is known as a knee raise). As you get stronger with the movement, you can gradually straighten your knees out as you do the exercise. This places more of the resistance further out from your body, making the exercise more challenging. Be sure to always keep some bend in your knees, however.

The key with the leg raise is to roll the hips up and around, bending from the waist rather than only raising the legs. Since one of the major functions of the abs is to bring the rib cage closer to the pelvis, if you simply raise the legs by bending only at the hip joint, you'll only use the abs isometrically (without moving). By rolling and raising the hips up and around, you will more strongly involve the abs and you'll get a more effective workout.

When you start the movement, don't push off from the ground to get started. This will reduce the effectiveness of the exercise because much of the good tension happens at the start. Bring the legs up and around and hold there at the top for a few seconds, squeezing hard.

Lower slowly and repeat.

Common Errors

1. Using momentum

Don't swing the legs up in order to do the exercise. Using momentum like this will take tension off the abs, making the exercise less effective.

2. Don't push off the ground to get started

Pushing off the ground to get started takes tension off the abs at the beginning, which is one of the most effective points in the exercise. Be sure to lift your feet completely off the ground before you start raising the legs.

Tricks

1. Use hooks or straps to assist your grip

If you find your grip to be too much of a weak point, you can use grip assistance equipment such as wrist straps or lifting hooks to hold on longer. My personal preference are the [1 Ton Hooks](#). They're an excellent piece of equipment that basically eliminates grip fatigue as a factor in all gripping-related movements.

2. If your grip is not strong enough, alternate hands with each rep

For example, do one rep with your right hand then one rep with your left hand then back to your right hand, etc. This gives your grip more of a rest while you're doing the exercise, allowing you to continue longer. The only drawback is that you lose the continuous tension on the abs.

[One Arm Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Forearm Supported Leg Raises](#) • [High Pulley Hook Crunches](#) • [High Pulley Lying Crunches](#)
[Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins](#) • [Seated Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Roll-Ups](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Forearm Supported Leg Raises

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise dramatically increases the tension on the abs as you do the leg raise exercise because it also forces the abs to work to support and stabilize your body on the hanging chair. This increased demand on the abs really increases the effectiveness of the standard hanging chair leg raise exercise.

This exercise generally requires use of a Hanging Leg Raise Chair but it can be adapted to other pieces of equipment. It looks just like a standard leg raise but with an important twist - rather than supporting yourself with your upper arms vertical so that your shoulders support your bodyweight, you will be dropping down and forcing your abs to work to support your bodyweight as well.

How To Do It

Hanging Chair Version

First, set yourself in the chair as you normally would. Now move yourself forward on the forearm pads so that your back is away from the pad and you're resting only on your elbows. Now angle your hands in towards each other rather than having them going straight forward (your fists and knuckles can be touching in the middle or your hands can be free). You'll look like you're punching your fists together.

Now remove your feet from the steps and support yourself only on the bottom-most portions of your forearms down by your elbows. When you first do this exercise, keep your upper arms fairly vertical. This will give you an idea of how it's done. Do a leg raise (with legs almost straight) or knee raise (with knees very bent and in towards your chest) in that position.



Start



Finish (Knee Raise)



Finish (Legs Straight Out)

The key with the leg raise is to roll the hips up and around, bending from the waist rather than only raising the legs. Since one of the major functions of the abs is to bring the rib cage closer to the pelvis, if you simply raise the legs by bending only at the hip joint, you'll only use the abs isometrically (without moving). By rolling and raising the hips up and around, you will more strongly involve the abs and you'll get a more effective workout.

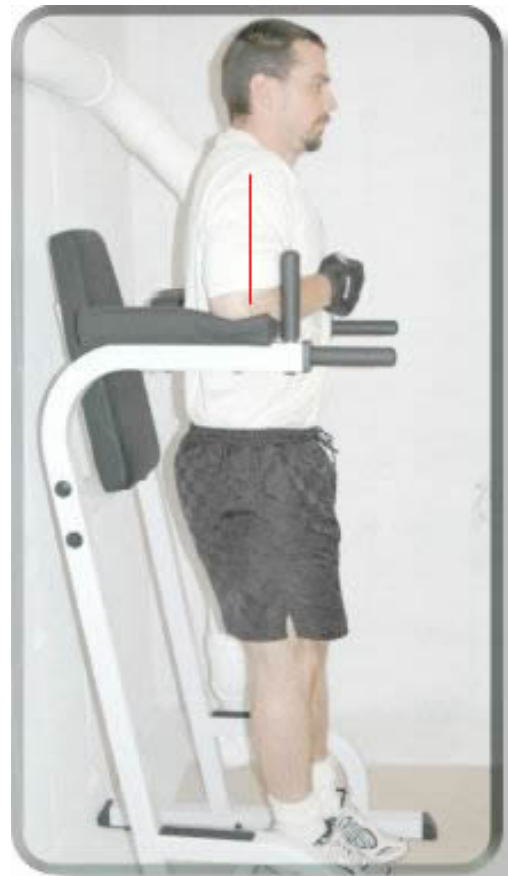
Now I'm going to show you how to increase the tension on the abs.

Get into the start position as explained above. Now, instead of keeping your upper arms fairly vertical, drop your body down while keeping your elbows where they are on the pads. The drop will happen only at the shoulders. The further down you drop, the more your abs will be forced to take up the tension. Just be sure not to drop down so far that you actually lose tension or let your feet touch the ground.

Notice in the pictures (using the red line as reference) how that instead of the upper arms being vertical, they are now at an angle. The flatter your upper arms are, the harder this exercise will be.



Arms Angled Down (harder)



Arms Vertical (easier)

This angle at your shoulder causes a great deal of isometric contraction in the abs while you're also using them to raise your legs. This dramatically increases the total tension on the abs, making it a far more effective workout.

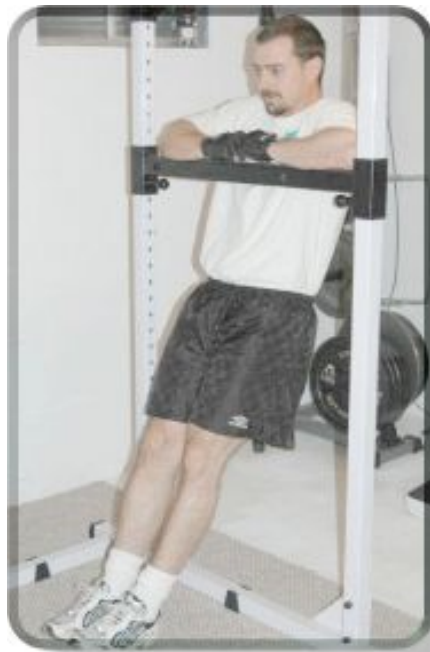
How to do it without a Hanging Chair - Much Harder!

If you don't have a Hanging Chair available or if you simply want to give an even tougher version a try, here's how it can be done. All you need is a flat railing or bar to support yourself on.

I've used the safety rail on the power rack, set to about chest height for this one and it works quite well (especially if the safety rail has a flat top surface rather than being an actual round rail). Anything that has a straight, flat surface on top and room to get your legs underneath will work for this one, making it a tough ab exercise that can be done in a wide variety of places.

First, set your entire forearms on the top surface with your elbows wide and your fists pressed together. Keep your chest in close to the rail, tighten up your abs and lats then lift your feet off the ground. You'll instantly feel the tension shoot into your abs.

Now do a leg raise or knee raise!



The tension you will get on the abs when you do this movement is tremendous. It's definitely an advanced exercise and requires good total upper body strength to be able to perform it properly for even a few reps.

By supporting yourself with your forearms in this fashion, you force the abs to take up the task of supporting almost your entire bodyweight. When your arms are at an angle like this, the increased tension is extremely strong - even stronger than the Hanging Chair version.

If you can do more than 2 or 3 reps the first time you try this one, you've got very strong abs!

Common Errors

1. Swinging your legs up

Like any leg raise movement, you don't want to swing the legs up to do the movement. It should be a deliberate muscle contraction, not a swing. The momentum from swinging decreases the tension and can put stress on the lower back.

2. Not rotating the hips up and around

As explained above, be sure to originate the leg raise at the waist, rotating and rolling your pelvis up and around. If you simply raise your legs by bending at the leg/hip joints, you'll only be working the abs isometrically.

3. Upper arms are too vertical

As you get stronger with it, you'll definitely want to drop your body down. If you keep your upper arms too vertical when you're stronger, you won't get the full effect of the exercise. Experiment with how far you drop down every time you do the exercise so you know exactly what your abs are capable of.



1. Increasing resistance

If dropping down in the chair is not enough, you can also hold a dumbbell in between your feet to increase the workload on the abs. Start with a very light weight as it doesn't take much weight at the end of your legs to really increase the resistance on the abs at that point. Adding resistance with a dumbbell can be done on both the Hanging Chair version and on the "railing" version.

2. Decreasing-resistance sets

Start with the hardest position of the Forearm Supported Leg Raise (body fully dropped down). As you fatigue with that, gradually lift your body up, decreasing the angle at the shoulders, making the exercise easier (because the abs won't be forced to support as much of your bodyweight). To really finish the abs, sit back into the chair as you normally would for the traditional chair exercise (body fully supported on the forearms with upper arms vertical and back against the pad) and finish with knee raises til failure.

3. Use a towel for padding

When doing the harder version of the forearm-supported leg raise on the flat surface (like a straight bar or safety rail in the rack), you can set a towel on the surface to improve the padding on your forearms and make the exercise more comfortable.

[One Arm Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Forearm Supported Leg Raises](#) • [High Pulley Hook Crunches](#) • [High Pulley Lying Crunches](#)
[Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins](#) • [Seated Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Roll-Ups](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

High Pulley Hook Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Using the high pulley to suspend your legs provides an extremely unique angle of pull on the lower abs. It allows you to work the lower abs with zero lower back stress!

How To Do It



This exercise is done using the high pulley (preferably on a cable machine, not a pulldown machine) with a cambered or straight bar attachment. Set the pulley up with a moderately heavy weight - it may take a little experimenting to get the proper weight.

Stand in front of the pulley and grasp the bar. Pull it down with your hands and lie on your back as though you are doing a regular floor crunch. Hook your knees over the top of the bar attachment. The weight should be heavy enough that it suspends your legs off the ground but light enough that you can keep it from pulling your legs upward and losing the bar.

Your hips will be pulled a little off the ground in this position and your knees should be bent about 90 degrees. Do a regular crunch in this position. As you crunch up, try to push the weight downward to activate the glutes and hamstrings.

The way the weight pulls your legs up forces you to contract your hamstrings and glutes to keep the weight from pulling your legs up even further. This removes the hip flexors from the exercise. Also, the suspension effect throws the resistance of the crunch onto your lower abdominal area.

This suspension effect also removes all lower back tension from the exercise. You're basically putting your back in traction while crunching!

Common Errors

1. Using too much, or too little weight

If you use too much weight, the bar will either slip out from under your legs, or you'll be too busy fighting to keep it in place to do or feel the exercise properly. Conversely, if the weight is too light, the weight of your legs will keep the bar down and you won't have to contract your glutes or hamstrings. Also, your lower body won't be suspended as you do the exercise. Play around with the weight you set on the pulley.

2. Not feeling for the tension

This exercise is not a "brute force" type of abdominal exercise. It's very important to take it slowly and feel where the tension is going through the abs. Try to consciously squeeze and activate the lower abs as you crunch up.

Tricks

1. Superset this exercise

If you have strong abs, you may need to superset this exercise with another exercise to really feel it strongly working the lower abs. Good exercises to use include [Cable Gripping Trunk Twists](#), [Abdominal Sit-Ups](#), [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#), and [Curl Squats](#).

2. Suck in your gut as you crunch

Sucking in your gut throws more of the leverage onto the lower ab area as you do the hook crunch.

3. Crunch to the sides to strongly hit the lower side abs

Crunch up as though trying to touch your elbow to your opposite knee. This movement in a normal crunch will work the upper sides. With the tension from the cable, this will hit the lower side abs even more.

4. Poke yourself in the lower abs

This trick helps your lower abs contract harder - as you crunch up, use your fingers from both hands to poke yourself in the lower abs. Your lower abs will contract to keep your fingers from poking in too far. It sounds strange but it works!



Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Abdominal Sit-Ups

Updated below!

All Training Levels



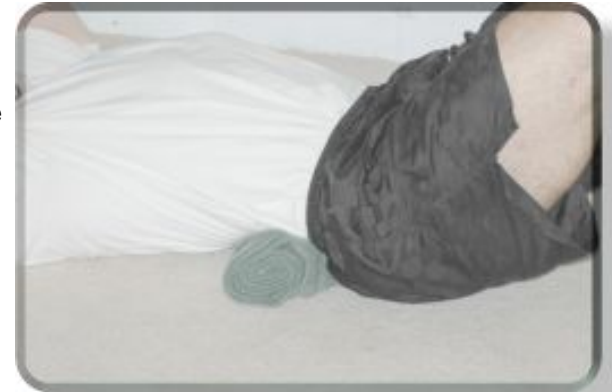
Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is a sit-up movement that works the abs instead of the hip flexors. It will work all the muscles in your midsection in one exercise.

The standard **Crunch** only addresses part of the function of the abdominals. This exercise targets the flexed (arched back) range of motion of the abs and utilizes the weight of your entire torso as resistance.

How To Do It

- Lie on your back on the floor. Roll up a towel or mat and slip it underneath your lower back just above the waistband (the size of the towel affects your body position during this movement - use a fairly large towel).
- Your knees should be bent about 90 degrees. Keep your feet close together and knees fairly wide apart. This prevents the hip flexors from having a direct line of pull, helping to minimize their involvement.
- Do not anchor your feet or have someone hold them down. This automatically activates the hip flexors. You will get the most out of this exercise by minimizing their involvement.
- The difficulty of this exercise depends on where you hold your hands. The hardest position is above your head at arms-length, then beside your head, then across your chest, then straight down between your legs or at your sides. Start with the easiest first then progress to the other positions as you get stronger.



You are now ready to crunch.

- Keeping your torso straight and stiff, start the sit-up by tightening your lower abs.
- As you continue up, imagine trying to push your face up against the ceiling (think up, not around).
- When you reach about 25 to 30 degrees above horizontal, hold for a second and squeeze hard.
- Keep your back in contact with the towel at all times and always maintain tension in the abs.
- Lower yourself down slowly and under control. Do not just drop back to the ground. The negative portion of this exercise is extremely effective.



Common Errors

1. Using momentum

Do not swing yourself up to get started. Always squeeze yourself up using ab power. Start with the easiest positions first, i.e. arms down at your sides, or try these on a slant board (with your head higher up) if you have trouble doing this exercise.

2. Losing tension at the top

This occurs when you come too far up. Always maintain contact with the towel and keep tension in your abs.

3. Allowing the glutes to come off the ground

Keep the glutes on the ground at all times. The tendency for the glutes to come up occurs at the start of the rep when your abs are first trying to get your body off the ground and your back is pivoting over the towel. It is easier to lift your glutes up at that point in order to do the exercise.

4. Coming up too far

This error actually takes the tension off the abs at the point where they should be getting the most tension. Keep your lower back in contact with the towel throughout the exercise.

5. Improper towel placement

The towel should be just above the waistband area in the small of the back. Placing it too high or too low will affect the exercise negatively.

Tricks

1. Hand position drop set

When you get stronger at these, start with your hands over your head. When you fail with that, continue with your hands beside your head. Then continue with hands across the chest, then hands at your sides or between your legs to finish. It is a merciless drop set.



2. Extra resistance

For extra resistance, hold a weight plate in your hands. Start very light (e.g. 5 to 10 pounds) as balance can be a problem, especially because your feet should not be anchored.

3. Spotting yourself

Extra resistance, as described previously, can also be used to spot yourself. Hold it out in front of you instead of behind you. This will act as a counterbalance and help to pull your body up.

4. The extra-hard contraction

Here is a technique that will give you an extra-hard contraction.

- Once you come up to about 25 degrees, bring your arms in so that your forearms are in front of your face (like a boxer covering up).
- Pivoting just below the rib cage using your upper abs only, crunch your elbows down towards your hips and squeeze hard, exhaling completely. Your lower abs will not move at all.
- This makes it look like a two-part movement - the sit-up then stop, then the crunch over.
- You can also give yourself a little spot during this part by grabbing onto your legs and pulling over.



5. Working the sides

To work the sides more during this movement, come up to 25 degrees then do a twisting crunch over to the side. Don't do the twist as you are coming up in the

sit-up, do it after you are up to about 25 degrees.

6. Breathe at the top

Try holding the contraction at the top and breathing in and out a few times. This will really force your abs to contract.

7. Lengthwise on a bench

Lie lengthwise along a bench with the towel under your lower back. Your shoulders should be just off the end of the bench so you can stretch back and down a little (the edge of the bench should be just below the shoulder blades). Your head and arms will be hanging off the end of the bench. This will give you a greater range of motion. Execute the movement the same way.

8. Hold your feet off the floor

For extra tension on the abs, hold your feet just slightly off the floor as you're doing these.

Lower Ab Raises

This variation of the Ab Sit-up exercise targets the lower abs.

- Start in the same body and towel position as the regular version.
- Place your hands beside the towel or beside your glutes.
- Now instead of lifting your torso up over the towel, raise your legs and pelvis up and over.
- Keep your feet together and your knees apart to minimize hip flexor recruitment.
- Suck in your gut to help isolate the lower abs.
- Your butt should come right up off the floor when your pelvis rolls up and over the towel.
- When you suck up your gut, imagine you are trying to suck your legs up to your chest through vacuum power alone, then rolling your pelvis over the towel.
- You can alternate between the sit-up style and leg raise style to hit your abs from both directions in one set.





Incline Ab Sit-Ups

This is a good starting variation of the ab sit-up.

- Set an incline board to a slight incline. If you don't have an incline board, you can use an adjustable incline bench, a decline bench, a Step platform with a riser under one of the ends or a flat bench with something under one end.
- The execution is exactly the same. The only difference is that the tension on the abs is much less due to the leverage, allowing even people who are not as advanced to do the exercise.
- It is also a very good way for advanced trainers to do high reps with this exercise.

Partial Resistance Cable Ab Sit-Ups

Update!

This is a very unique variation of the Ab Sit-Up that should only be done by intermediate to advanced trainers. You will need an adjustable height pulley (a high pulley with an extended chain will also work). Set the pulley to about hip height, a few feet off the ground and hook a rope attachment to it. If you are using the high pulley, first pull the pin out, pull the rope down the put the pin back in where you want it. Use a light weight - you don't need much resistance, especially at first.

Lie down a few feet in front of the pulley with your head pointing back towards the pulley. Set the towel under your back as in other variations.

Do the Ab Sit-Up as you normally would. As you come up to the top, grab the rope ends in your hands (don't pull on them yet). When you've come to the top position, pull down on the rope as though doing a forward pushdown movement, bring the rope down between your legs towards your feet. You may need to experiment with where you set yourself on the floor so that you get tension at the start of this.

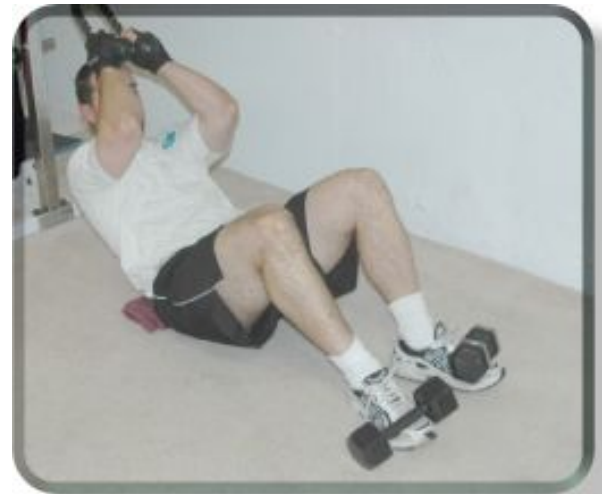
Hold this position for a few seconds. Not only are you holding your body up with your abs, but you are also using your abs to pull the rope down. It's a double hit on your abs!

With this exercise, if your feet are not held down, you'll need to keep the weight light in order to be able to balance yourself. If the weight is too heavy, when you go to push, you won't be able to move the weight.





To use more weight on the cable, set 2 dumbbells on top of your feet (hook the handles over). This will allow you to use heavier weight, making the exercise VERY hard (trust me!).



[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Bench End Leg Raise / Cable Crunches

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise works your abdominals from two directions in the same exercise, which is extremely difficult but extremely effective. The vast majority of abdominal exercises only work from one direction, e.g. the crunch works from the top down.

This exercise combines a lengthwise bench-end leg raise with the low pulley cable crunch. Your lower abs lift your legs up, giving you tension from the bottom up while your upper abs then perform a weighted crunch, giving you tension from the top down.

How To Do It

The best bench and cable setup to do this exercise on is the seated low row machine, though you can also set it up using a regular flat bench and a low pulley. If your pulley is adjustable in height, set it about level with the surface of the bench.

- Set the bench lengthwise for greatest stability. Don't set up the bench perpendicular to the weight stack. If you place it this way, there is not enough surface area for you to maintain stability safely and you will fall over backwards the moment you grasp the cable handle.
- Use a rope attachment or close grip row attachment on the low pulley, setting the handles where you will be able to reach them.
- Set yourself on the end of the bench with your glutes off. Your lower back will be rounded over the end of the bench.
- Start with your feet on the ground. You will be starting the movement once you have the cable handle in your hands.
- Reach back and grip the rope/bar, holding the ends/handles near the top of your head. Use a moderate weight on the pulley.
- If you can't reach back far enough to grab the rope/bar you can either have somebody hand it to you or you can try this trick: remove the pin from the stack, pull the weight up a few notches then put the pin back in. What this does is extend the reach of the cable so that you are able to grasp it by reaching up and back.

- Crunch up a little so that the weight is not resting on the stack and you have tension in your abs. You should now lift your legs off the floor somewhat.
- Now, keeping your hands and upper abs exactly where they are, do the leg raise movement curling your lower back up and over the lip of the bench.
- Lower your legs but try not to let your feet touch the floor between reps in order to maintain tension on the abs. As *shown in the video*, however, you may choose to place your feet on the floor in between leg raises while you are doing the crunch phase.
- As you come down and your feet are getting close to the floor, start to do a cable crunch. Squeeze hard at the top of it. Your hips and lower back should be hooked over the end of the bench by this time, anchoring your lower body so that you don't slide up the bench.
- Come down from the crunch without letting the plates touch on the stack, then immediately go into the leg raise again.
- Do this entire sequence without letting your feet touch the ground, or the plates on the cable rack touch each other.



Start



Begin Leg Raise



Thrust Feet Towards Ceiling



Bottom of Leg Raise



Cable Crunch Up

Common Errors

1. Incorrect timing

This movement is done as a one-two punch: legs go up right after torso goes down, legs come down, torso goes up. Altering the timing significantly can lead to strain on your back and can throw off your balance.

It will almost resemble a rocking motion like that of a rocking chair, however you won't be relying on momentum to do the exercise.

2. Glutes not off bench

- The most effective position for the leg raise is with the glutes entirely off the bench. Imagine you are hooking your butt over the end of the bench.
- The edge of the bench should be just above your waistband. This allows for maximum flexion of the spine, which in turn gives your abdominals the greatest range of motion.
- Placing your body too high on the bench can strain your back and decrease the effectiveness of the movement.



3. Too much or not enough weight

- Using too much weight will limit the range of motion of your crunch and will most likely throw you off balance, causing the weight plates to touch between reps.
 - Using too little weight will cause your body to dip forward when your legs come down from the leg raise.
 - You must have enough weight there to keep yourself anchored but not so much that you can't do the crunch properly.
 - Generally, between 40 to 70 pounds is a good starting point, depending on your bodyweight.
-

1. Thrusting the legs

While the standard leg raise is good, the leg raise with a thrust at the top is even better. Accomplishing the thrust is simple. At the top of the leg raise, simply pretend as though you are trying to put your footprints on the ceiling. This thrust upwards adds another dimension of tension to the exercise.

2. Self spotting

You can spot yourself for more reps by using some of the momentum from the end of the negative of one phase and transferring it into momentum for the start of the next phase, e.g. when your legs come down, lock your abs near the bottom and transfer that momentum into your upper body for the crunch part of the movement.

- To do this, let your legs drop without trying to control the negative.
- Just before your legs hit, stop the movement with a muscle clench and transfer the momentum to your upper abs.

3. The twist

To hit your obliques and add a third dimension of tension to this exercise, rotate yourself as you thrust up from the leg raise. It will look as though you're trying to screw your feet into the ceiling. Alternate directions with each rep.

4. Crunching during the leg raise

For another extra hit, try crunching your upper body up at the top of the leg raise segment. To increase the resistance, use ankle weights (a dumbbell between your feet is not a good way to add extra resistance as the dumbbell can slip out easily and drop on you).



[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Two Ball Static Holds

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise works the abs with a tremendous degree of instability, making it a very effective core movement. You basically have nothing solid to stabilize yourself on while you are performing this exercise!

How To Do It

This exercise requires the use of two Swiss balls. The size of the balls do not have to be equal, though the difficulty and feel of the exercise can change depending on whether you place your hands on the larger ball or smaller ball (it's easier to start with the hands on the larger ball).

Set the balls on floor a few feet apart. Stand so that the balls are both lined up in front of you. Kneel down on the ball in front of you, keep your toes on the ground. Now, set your thighs on the smaller ball and your hands on the bigger one (if you have two different size balls). Be

sure to spread fingers wide on the big ball and grip the ball more towards the sides for better control of it.

Your thighs should set more towards the sides of the other ball as well, so that they're basically squeezing the ball, making it easier to control with your lower body.



Lift your feet up off the floor and squeeze both of the balls tight! You'll immediately start losing your balance as the balls start shifting around. Keep your abs tight while you fight to stay on top of the balls. This is maximum core stability work here. Just struggling to keep your balance on the balls is excellent for the core.

Common Errors

1. Setting the thighs too close together on the ball

If you set your thighs on the top of the ball, you'll be far more likely to fall off the ball as you won't be able to exert any controlling pressure to either side.

2. Setting your hands too close together on top of the ball

If you set your hands right together on top of the ball, it'll be harder to control and will move around much more. Keep them somewhat off to the sides to help maintain stability.

Tricks

1. Helping with balance

To help with balance, you can also rest one foot on the floor to decrease the instability. Also, pushing the ball that your hands are on up against a wall will help to decrease the instability by giving you something to brace against.

The best approach is to go for as long as you can with your feet up, then put your foot down when you have to.



[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Combat Crunches

Advanced



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is an exercise that is extremely effective for developing a resistance to blows to the abdomen - perfect for boxers and martial artists. Each time the plate comes down, your abs contract hard to prevent damage.

Please note: you should already have strong abs before performing this exercise! This is a specialized exercise that involves forceful impact to the abdominal region.

How To Do It

This is a very similar movement to both a pullover and a weighted crunch. You are essentially combining the two movements into a pullover crunch.

The execution is simple (you're going to get some strange looks when you do this one!), lie flat on your back on the floor and hold a barbell plate (or dumbbell) behind your head. As you crunch up, bring the weight over the top of your head in a pullover movement. At the top of the crunch, continue swinging the weight down and around and drop it down onto your tightened abs (around the belly button area - NOT the upper abs). Be sure to squeeze them hard!

Raise the weight back up, bring it back behind your head and repeat.

This slam toughens the abs and gets them used to getting hit. Also, the rebound you get when the weight contacts your abs gives your abs another quick contraction on top of the one you're already getting from holding the crunch position.

This exercise is great for contact sports as it really trains your abs for taking heavy blows (swinging a 45 pound plate around and onto your stomach is definitely a heavy blow!). As you get stronger, use a heavier weight and swing it around harder.



Common Errors

1. Going too heavy too quickly

If you use too much weight too soon, you could hurt yourself. Start easy and work up to it! This will give you a chance to get a feel for the movement without worrying about losing control of the weight as it comes around.

2. Not contracting the abs hard enough on impact

Your abs should be tightly clenched when the weight hits. Don't let them relax at this critical moment. That's why you should be in the fully-crunched position when you swing that weight around.

3. Hitting the wrong area

Be absolutely sure to stay away from the extreme upper ab area. This is getting up into the rib cage and sternum and you don't want to be slamming weight in that area. There is a little bony piece called the Xiphoid Process (located at the end of the sternum) that can break if hit too hard. That's why you should hit only around the middle abdominal area (around the belly button), right in the meat of the abs.

4. Twisting crunches

Avoid doing any kind of twisting crunch in combination with this exercise. A twist will bring the rib around, putting it too close to the impact zone on your abs. We're only looking to hit the abs, not the bones.

Tricks

1. Use a barbell plate as a preference over dumbbells

A barbell plate has a small surface, allowing you stay away from the upper ab area.

2. Go to the drop only

As your abs tire and you aren't able to do more pullover crunches, just hold the weight above your abs, hold the top crunch position and just repeatedly drop it onto your abs.

3. Shift the target area

You can work different areas of your abs by moving the impact spot around on different reps. As I mentioned above, be sure to stay away from the upper ab area.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Curl Squats

Updated below!

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is an extraordinary exercise for building supporting strength and stability in the muscles of the core, especially for movement such as squats and deadlifts.

How To Do It

This exercise is simple to do with dumbbells, barbell or cables. Each kind has its different strengths and drawbacks, of course. It's a very similar movement to the front squat but without any of the support you would normally get from your shoulders when doing the exercise - all the support tension goes onto your abs!

The Barbell Version

Set the squat rack up so that the racks are one notch below where you would normally set them for squats. The reason you want to set it one below

is that by the time you're done with the exercise, it may be very hard to get it up to the height where you would normally rack the bar! With the racks a little lower, you'll have an easier time getting the bar back onto them. Set the safety rails just above where you normally set them for regular squats the first time you try this. When you develop a better feel for how it's done, you can lower them a little to get a fuller range of motion.

Step in front of the bar and hold it in the top position of the barbell curl. Now stand up, unracking the bar. Don't allow your elbows to brace against your midsection. This will take away from the supporting tension on the abs. Take a step back and get your feet set. Now, holding the bar in that top curl position through the entire movement, squat down as far as you can then come back up. You don't actually curl the bar while doing the squat, you just hold it in the top curl position.

Hold your breath during the majority of this movement to keep greater stability in your core. Start holding as you start to go below the halfway point and continue to hold it until you're about halfway back up. If you don't want to or are unable to hold your breath, exhale through pursed lips (as though you're blowing up a balloon). Keeping the breath held will maximize core stability and allow your abs to function more effectively during the movement. Since this exercise uses relatively light weight compared to a regular squat, holding your breath is not nearly as potentially dangerous. If you do feel lightheaded, rack the bar and rest.



Holding the resistance in front of your body, as you do in the exercise, takes away the shoulder support that you would normally get with a front squat. All this requirement for supporting tension goes directly onto the muscles of the core, all of which will have to contract hard throughout the entire movement in order to keep the barbell from falling forward.

This exercise helps you to get a feel for using the abs during a squat, which is extremely important for maximizing your squat strength. Using the abs while squatting is something that does not come naturally and is very rarely taught or explained to trainers. It also helps to greatly strengthen the abs for that specific purpose, making this a very powerful core and overall strength building exercise.

When doing the exercise for the first time, start with just the bar, no matter how strong you are. This will help you get a feel for how the movement feels, where to set the safety rails and how far down you can comfortably go. When you're comfortable, work your way up slowly from there as fatigue will come quickly. It's a movement your body will be totally unused to, no matter how many abdominal exercises you've done in your training career before this. The muscles of the core will tire before your legs do. Be sure to keep your lower back arched and tight while performing this movement.

If you're able to, go all the way down until your elbows touch your knees. This will give you the fullest range of motion. Tense the abs hard, especially at the bottom as you're coming back up. For extra resistance, pause at the bottom for a few seconds. This will give you the best feel for how the abs should be used when squatting.

With this exercise, holding the resistance in front of the body (like in a front squat) allows you to keep a more vertical body position. The tension will go onto the abs, but be aware that there will also be some tension going to the lower back. Because you're holding the weight out in front of you, the lower back must also contract to help stabilize the spine. As you keep up with the exercise, your lower back will get stronger.

Another great benefit to this exercise is that your breathing muscles (the intercostals) never get a chance to relax during this movement. From top to bottom and back up (even while you're "resting" at the top), your breathing muscles are being challenged because of the weight they are being forced to support. This can build up great lung capacity and breathing strength (excellent for athletes who need great cardio capacity) and carries directly over to your work capacity in the regular barbell squat.

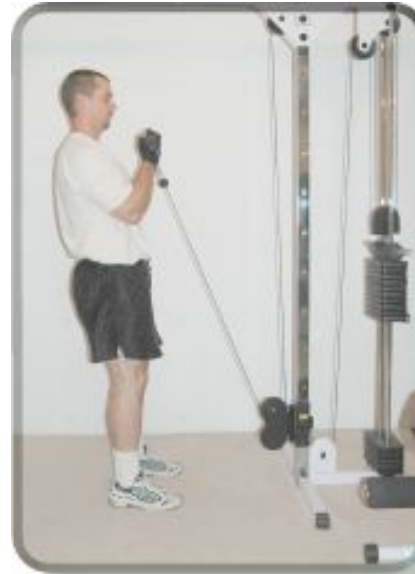
The Cable Version

The Cable version is essentially the same in form as the barbell version but with one big difference: the angle of the cable adds forward pulling resistance. This adds another element of tension to the abs as, in addition to supporting the weight, they're also forced to contract to keep you from falling forward. The exercise doesn't require as much stability control as the barbell version, however, and your breathing muscles won't be challenged as much as with the barbell version.

You will get the bar to the top of the curl position, take a step back, then perform the exercise as you would with the barbell.

If you have an adjustable-height cable setup, it's best to start this exercise

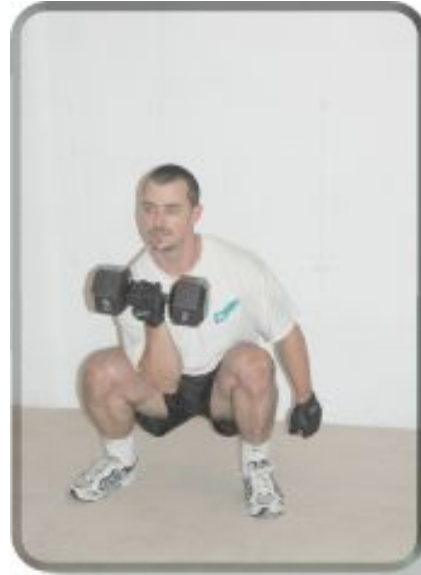
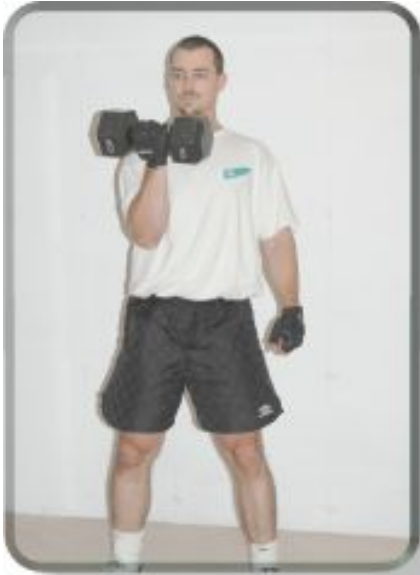
with the pulley set a few notches up (this makes it easier to get into the start position). If you just have a low-pulley, you'll need to curl the weight up into position to be able to start the movement.



The Dumbbell Version

The dumbbell version can be done two ways: with two dumbbells or with one dumbbell. The execution with two dumbbells is exactly the same as with the barbell version, the only difference being that you have to curl or clean the weight up to the top of the curl position to do the exercise.



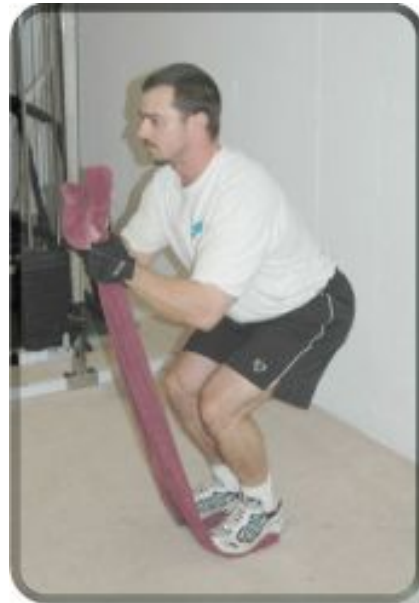
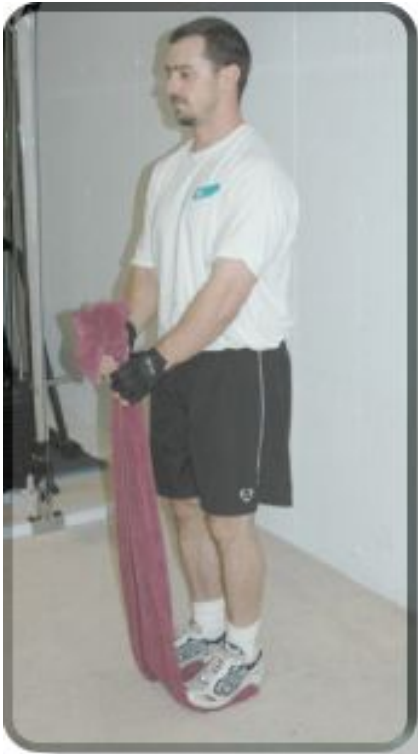


If you're using only one dumbbell, this one-sided tension will allow you to put torque on the abs to work the sides (switch sides with each set for a balanced workout). When you're using one dumbbell, you can also drop your elbow inside your knees to go down even deeper. You can get your butt right down by your heels with this one. Very challenging!

NEW! The Towel Version

This variation is done using a long towel (about 3 feet). Stand on one end of the towel and hold the other end in front of you with both hands. Try to pull up on the towel as though you're trying to get it out from under your feet. As you are pulling up hard, squat down. Your arms should stay where they are as you squat. Hold for a second at the bottom then come back up, fighting the squat with your arms like you're trying to use the pull on the towel to keep yourself down.

This fighting and tension with the towel mimics the Curl Squat exercise very strongly but requires no weight equipment to do. This variation can be done gripping the towel with only one arm as well.



Common Errors

1. Doing this exercise after a bicep workout

As you can imagine, performing this exercise is not going to be as effective if you've just finished a bicep workout. The biceps will already be fatigued and you'll limit the amount of weight you can use and how long you can hold it for. Use this exercise on non-bicep training days, if possible.

2. Going too fast

Dropping down quickly in the squat will put extra stress on the biceps as you come up and reduce the tension on the abs. This exercise should be done very deliberately with no bouncing or fast movements. If you have a tendency to do this, pause at the bottom for a few seconds to stop the

bouncing.

3. Using too much weight

Since the legs are so much stronger, it's tempting to use too much weight for this exercise. Remember, our goal here is NOT to work the legs or the biceps but to work the abs. The legs and the biceps are only here to help push the abs. If your biceps fatigue before your abs get a good workout, you need to reduce the weight.

4. Leaning forward

Try to keep your upper body as vertical as possible with this one. It's very similar to a front squat - having the weight in front of you allows you to stay vertical more easily. Leaning forward will cause the barbell to shift forward, which will put more tension on the biceps, causing them to fatigue prematurely. As you start to fatigue, you will notice you have a tendency to lean forward. This is because the supporting abs are weakening. Do your best to keep vertical. Once you start to move too far forward, end the set.

5. Bar too close to chin

If the bar gets too close to the collarbones, you will lose some of the tension in the abs. Keep it at least a few inches away to maximize the supporting tension and torque demanded of the abs. If it comes too close, it may be tempting to rest the bar on your collarbones, which will turn it into an uncomfortable front squat.

6. Letting the elbows brace strongly against the midsection

If you let the elbows press strongly into the midsection, it will take away some of the tension on the abs. A little contact is fine, especially as you get tired, but don't rely on using this technique or it will make the exercise less effective. Letting the elbows sink in like this will also tend to hunch your back over, putting pressure on the lower back. This will in turn pull your torso and center of balance forward, putting more tension on the biceps, making you dig the elbows in more! Keep the elbows out front, away from your body and you'll keep a better body position and do a more effective set.



1. Adding a small twist

This variation is going to work more of the side aspect of the abs, building some dynamic stability and power. Start with just the bar when you do this version - you won't need as much weight with this one. As you lower down, rotate your body gradually about 15 to 20 degrees to the side then come back up using the same exercise form as in the normal version. This is a great functional strength builder but be careful of the lower back here. The rotation, if performed too fast or too far around, could put stress on the lower back. When done slowly and carefully, it's perfectly safe.

2. Look forward and slightly up

When you squat, keeping looking forward and slightly up. This will help you to keep an arch in your lower back and keep you from leaning forward. We want to avoid forward lean as it causes the biceps to fatigue prematurely.

3. Don't breathe too deeply in or out as you're coming down or pushing back up

Breathing too much during this exercise reduces core stability and can compromise your form. For best core stabilization, keep your breath carefully controlled. At the bottom, you can hold your breath for a few moments to get the most solid stability. As you come up, you can exhale through pursed lips after you've come about 1/4 to 1/2 of the way. This technique shouldn't be used if you have blood pressure issues, however, as it does cause an increase in blood pressure. Keep a careful eye on how you feel if you do choose to do this - and if you feel any dizziness, end the set and then don't use this technique the next set.

4. Pause at the bottom

To really maximize the tension on the abs, pause for a few seconds at the bottom and focus on really squeezing and tightening your abs hard. As you start to come back up, try to push with your abs as well. This will help you to feel what it's like to use the abs to help push out of the bottom when doing regular barbell squats.

5. Partial Front Squats **NEW!**

Another excellent way to build core strength using a barbell-supporting exercise is the Partial Front Squat. It's done exactly the same as a regular Front Squat only you just do the top few inches of the range of motion. This allows you to use far more weight on the bar to really challenge the supporting muscles of the core. For this exercise, I highly recommend the [Sting Ray](#) (a molded piece of plastic that fits on the bar and more evenly distributes the weight of the bar across your shoulders). This is a VERY structurally-oriented exercise that will allow you to hit the abs with extremely heavy weight. At the start, lean back a bit to counterbalance the barbell.



[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Leg Press Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise allows you to increase the resistance on the abs without placing tremendous pressure on your lower back. Most exercises that add resistance to the crunch also increase the torque on the lower back - this doesn't.

How To Do It

This exercise can be done on any version of the leg press, be it the regular seated version, the 45 degree press or the vertical press. Set a fairly heavy weight on the press. You're not going to be lifting it very far with this exercise. The abs are going to be working to stabilize the legs and help support the weight while you're doing the crunching movement and performing the top range of the press.

Sit in the press then press the weight up until you are about 1/2 to 3/4 of the way through the movement. **DO NOT** lock out your legs - your knees should still be bent at the start. You want to keep tension on the legs.

While you're sitting in the seat, lean back for the start position. As you start doing a forward crunch movement, push the weight up to the top position of the leg press (just short of lockout) with your feet. Come up as far as you can and squeeze the abs as hard as you can. This combination of pressing with the legs while crunching over strongly works the abs in a very unique fashion.



Move your mouse over the picture to see the exercise in action

Note how the upper body crunches forward at the same time the legs extend.

Common Errors

1. Locking out the knees

The most important thing to remember with this exercise is to NOT lock out the knees. It's the tension

on the legs that adds to the tension on the abs as you're doing the crunch movement. If the knees are locked out, there won't be nearly as much tension.

2. Letting the knees bend too much

If your knees are TOO bent, your thighs may give out before you're able to get a good abdominal workout. The key here is to do only 1/2 to 1/4 reps with the weight, not full leg presses.

3. Not clenching the abs hard

Simply doing the crunch movement is not enough with this exercise. To get the most out of it, squeeze the abs as hard as you can as you push a little with the legs. Try to imagine your abs helping to push the weight up.

Tricks

1. Hold weight plates for more resistance

This trick is especially useful when doing the exercise on a vertical (lying flat on your back) or 45 degree leg press. If you're doing it on a seated leg press where you're sitting normally, you won't get any extra resistance. As you do the crunch movement, hold a weight plate either on your chest or behind your head. This gives your abs even more resistance as you're doing the exercise.

The same effect can also be achieved with the use of exercise bands or tubing. All you need is a piece long enough to wrap around both yourself and the back of the leg press back pad (it's possible to also tie it onto something behind you, if you can). Push against this resistance as you do the crunch on the leg press.

2. Finish with it

Since the range of motion is not large and the abs are worked more as stabilizers than actual movers, this exercise is more effective as a finishing exercise for the abs. It can also be very good for beginning trainers who want to try using a little extra weight in an ab exercise.

3. Move your body up

For extra tension on the abs, don't sit down on the seat. Move your body up so your glutes are off the pad and you're basically wedged between the back rest and the leg press foot plate, using the tension between the two to support yourself up off the seat. This will increase the tension that's placed on the abs during the exercise.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Ball Arm Scissors

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise stresses the abs in a very unique fashion - one that is extremely applicable to sports such as cross-country skiing, swimming and paddling. The cross-tension placed on the abs during this exercise works synergistically with the the chest and back to build diagonal strength through the core.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need a Swiss ball (exercise ball) and two dumbbells. The dumbbells should be light the first time you try this exercise in order to get a feel for how the movement is performed and the kind of weight that you will be capable of using.

Hold the dumbbells in your hands and lay back on the ball, rounding your back over the ball. Keep your hips low and your feet apart to help maintain balance on the ball. Now hold the dumbbells directly above your body with your arms slightly bent. Lower the left dumbbell up and over your head as though you're about to do a pullover with that one. At the same time, lower the right dumbbell forwards beside your thigh.

Lower both of the dumbbells until your arms are both horizontal. Now, with a quick clench of the abs, raise them both up at the same time. Keep tension in the abs as you're raising the dumbbells (you can even attempt to crunch up a little to get a bit more tension in the abs).

When both the dumbbells are at the top, pause for a second then keep going by lowering the left dumbbell beside your thigh and raising the right dumbbell up and back overhead. Again, give the abs a quick, hard clench when you change direction and begin raising the dumbbells up to the top again.



Start



Middle



Bottom



Other Direction

Common Errors

1. Locking the arms

It's important to keep the arms slightly bent as you're doing this exercise to keep stress off the elbows.

2. Moving too fast

This is an exercise that requires a slower movement, not momentum, especially when changing directions at the bottom. The quick clench at the bottom helps to activate the abs.

3. Using too much or too little weight

If you're using too much weight, you'll know very quickly - you won't be able to raise the dumbbell that's beside your thigh. Drop down to a lower weight and try again. If you're using too little weight, you won't feel a whole lot going on in the abs. It's important to try to use more weight when you can, but not so much that you can't do the exercise successfully.

Tricks

1. Rotate the arm that is lowering to the thigh

If you find you get some shoulder pain when lowering the dumbbell to the thigh in the neutral grip, rotate your hand so that you're holding the dumbbell in a curl grip. This takes the tension off the shoulder joint and puts more of it on the bicep instead.

2. Quick clench at the bottom

As I mentioned above, giving the abs a quick clench at the bottom when you're changing directions will strongly activate the abs.



[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#) • [Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#) • [Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#) • [The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Ball Pullover Crunch Supports

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Your abs will be put to the test in a variety of ways through every section of this exercise. By combining resistance from several different directions over the course of a rep, your abs will be challenged to not only pull, but push and support at the same time.

How To Do It

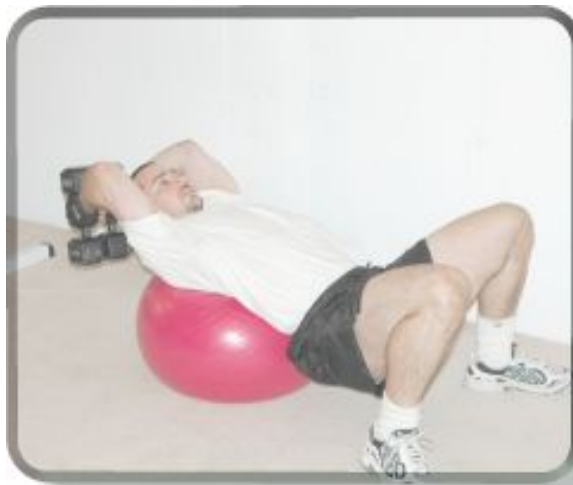
This exercise requires a Swiss ball and two dumbbells to perform (one dumbbell will work but two will be better). The dumbbells should be a moderate weight to start.

Lay back on the ball, holding the dumbbells in your hands. Drop your hips down and set your feet wide apart on the floor (you'll see why). Press the two dumbbells together tightly (this improves their stability during the movement), bend your arms slightly then lower them back and down behind your head in a pullover movement.

Feel for a good stretch on the abs at the bottom. Tighten the abs, then begin pulling the dumbbells back and over your body. Bring the dumbbells all the way to the top then, bending your elbows a little more, lower them forward in front of you. Your upper body will come up and you will be in pretty much a sitting position on the ball while supporting the dumbbells in front of you. Keep your breath held briefly while you hold the dumbbells there or breathe through pursed lips. This maintains stability in the core while it's supporting the weight.

DO NOT let your forearms rest on your thighs at the bottom. That will release the tension on the abs where you want them doing the work of supporting the dumbbells in front of you. This is why your feet are set far apart. You need room to hold the dumbbells in front.

Support the dumbbells there for a few seconds, squeezing the abs **HARD**. Now bring them back up to the top, laying back on the ball as you do so. Continue the movement back to the pullover that you started with.





Common Errors

1. Letting the arms rest on the thighs

DON'T let the arms rest on the thighs at the bottom of the support. This will release the tension in the abs when you want the tension to be maximized on the abs. It's okay if your arms brush or lightly touch your thighs - just be sure you're not letting them rest or supporting the weight on them.

2. Locking the arms

It's important to keep your arms slightly bent when performing this exercise to keep the stress off the elbows.

3. Not dropping the hips during the pullover

If you don't drop the hips and round your back over the ball, the weight of the dumbbells will pull you backwards and you may lose your balance and roll over the ball. Keeping your hips down counterbalances this tendency.

4. Not keeping the dumbbells pressed together

If you separate the dumbbells while doing this exercise (especially during the support), you'll lose a great deal of stability in the core. Pressing the

dumbbells together increases ab stability and core activation. This is why, in fact, using two dumbbells is actually better than using only one. Using only one dumbbell doesn't result in this extra core activation because you can't achieve the same degree of inward pressure. To demonstrate this, when doing a rep and you're in the support, try separating the two dumbbells. You'll feel an immediate drop in the stability of the core.



Wrong



Right

Tricks

1. Imagine the "caber" toss

If you've ever seen the Highland Games in Scotland where they support a large log (a caber) by holding it under one end then toss it as far as they can by powerfully lifting up, then you know what to imagine when coming up out of the support. Basically, when you start to bring the dumbbells up out of the bottom position, imagine as though you're forcefully throwing the weight back behind you. Naturally, you don't want to actually do that but that's the movement to imagine.

2. Crunch up as you're doing the pullover

To really give the abs a hard workout, try to combine a crunch movement with the pullover phase of the exercise. Basically, as you're pulling the dumbbell up and over, try to push yourself up towards the ceiling in a crunch type movement. This will dramatically increase the tension on the abs and keep it on the abs for more time during the exercise.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Bar and Ball Roll-Ins

Advanced



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Combine the instability of the ball with the instability of a rolling barbell and add in a roll-in movement and you've got yourself an extremely powerful ab stability builder.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will use a straight or EZ bar with weight plates on it (25's are good) and a Swiss Ball. The bar will be able to roll around (because the weight plates are round) as you're doing the exercise, giving you an excellent degree of instability for the abs. You will be placing your hands on the bar and your thighs on the ball, then rolling forward on the ball, bringing your knees toward the bar.

Place your hands fairly wide apart on the EZ bar for best control. The further to the sides the thighs are on the ball, the more control you'll have on your lower body. Placing your hands closer together on the bar will make the exercise harder (which is a good progression once you get the hang of the exercise).

Roll the ball forward towards the EZ bar, bending your knees and coming up so that your shins are on top of the ball. Pull the bar towards you as you roll forward on the ball. Major ab stabilization is required for this one. The bar will roll around a lot at first, but it will get less the more you practice with it.



Common Errors

1. Setting the thighs too close together on the ball

If you set your thighs on the top of the ball, you'll be far more likely to fall off the ball as you won't be able to exert any controlling pressure to either side.

2. Setting your hands too close together on top of the bar

If you set your hands right together on the bar, it'll be harder to control and will move around much more. Keep them further apart when you first do this movement. You can move them together as you get better at it.

Tricks

1. Come up on your toes

To make this exercise even more challenging, instead of rolling up onto your shins, roll up onto your tip toes on top of the ball. This will dramatically increase the stability demands on the abs during the exercise.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Lower Abs	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Rotational/Obliques	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Total Ab Exercises	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Exercise Update #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Extra Topics	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Cable Push Crunches

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Simply the most complete application of tension from stretch to full contraction that I've ever found in an abdominal exercise. Your abs won't know what hit them.

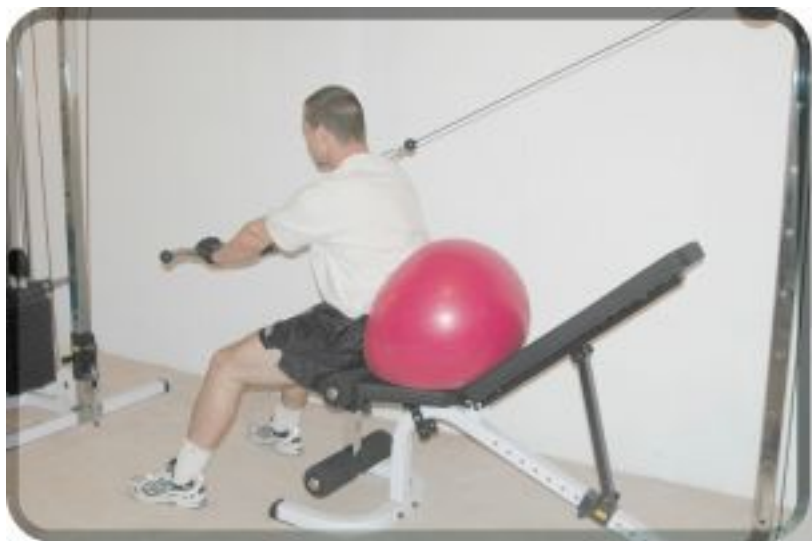
How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need a high pulley, a Swiss ball, an incline bench and a bar attachment. First, set the incline bench to about 45 degrees and set it in front of the high pulley, facing away from it. Set the ball on the seat of the bench and attach the cable attachment to the high pulley.



If you have a chain or cable extension (about 2 feet long is good), attach that before putting the bar onto the high pulley. Having a long chain that the bar is hanging from will make this exercise easier to get into position for at the start.

Sit on the front edge of the bench with your lower back on the ball. Reach back and grab the bar behind you. If you didn't have the longer chain, it's best to have someone hand the bar to you in order to be able to use more resistance with this exercise without having trouble getting into position.



Bring the cable over your shoulder then extend your arms straight out in front like you just finished a pressing movement forward. Your lower back should be arched over the ball.

Now comes the push...

Keeping your arms locked straight out in front of you, push the bar forward as far as you can, leaning over as you push. Clench your abs as hard as you can. Hold at the peak for a few seconds then lower back to the start position slowly.

Keep your arms locked at the

bottom of the movement as well. Let the weight push you back into the ball, getting a stretch on the abs. Begin the push with a clench of your abs then push forward again.



Common Errors

1. Not pushing

Don't think of this movement as a crunch. If you try and crunch forward, you won't get any useful resistance. The idea with this exercise is to try and forcefully push the bar forward as far as you can. Your abs have no choice but to activate in order for your body to perform this movement.

2. Going too slow

This is a powerful movement off the bottom. If you go too slow, it will still work but will limit the amount of weight you can use. With a powerful movement, you'll be able to move more weight throughout the entire rep, allowing you to have more resistance in the fully contracted position. This position is about the best contraction you can get on the abs.

Tricks

1. Add a pullover

To add a different element of stretch to this exercise, use a lighter weight and add a pullover to the beginning of each rep. This pullover will put a greater stretch on the abs at the start of the movement.

The downside to this is that you won't be able to use as much weight when it comes to the pushing phase of the movement. Starting from a greater stretch can compensate for this to a degree.



[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Wall Walker Sissy Squats

Advanced

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise appears to be, at first glance, a quadricep exercise. Don't let that fool you, though. The support and stabilizing tension that is put through the abs with this exercise is phenomenal. You also get the ability to add a tremendous amount of weight to the exercise, which makes it ideal for building core strength.

How To Do It

If you're interested in building incredible core stabilizing strength that's going to help you not only in any sport you do but in all your lifts in the gym as well, this exercise should be near the top of your list. To perform this exercise, you should have a strong midsection and lower back. This exercise does put tension on the area and if you have a weak or problematic lower back, it may lead to injury. If your lower back is strong and has no problems, you should be just fine with the exercise.

Start by setting one of the safety rails in the power rack very close to the bottom (the bottom hole

or one up will work best). This is the rail your feet are going to be standing on. Set the other safety rail at about chest height. This is the rail taht your hands will be pushing on.

Try this exercise without any extra weight the first time you do it, just to get an idea of how the exercise is performed. Stand in the center of the rack, facing the higher safety rail. Set your hands on the rail about shoulder width apart. Step one of your feet on the lower rail behind you then the other foot. Your body should be straight and stiff, very much like the push-up position, only your body is at an angle.

Tighten your abs strongly before starting. Now, bending only at the knees (like when doing a Sissy Squat), lower yourself down towards the floor. Imagine that you are trying to touch your knees to the floor without bending any other part of your body. Breathe in as you start lowering yourself. As you get near the bottom, you should hold your breath, especially during the time when you're changing directions at the bottom to maximize core stability. As you come up, breathe out through pursed lips.

While doing this movement, you should be pushing hard with your hands against the top rail and pushing hard with your feet on the bottom rail. These opposing forces work to keep you on the rails. Your abs will take up the majority of the stabilizing force of the exercise, with the tension moving progressively over the abs as you lower yourself down. As a bonus, the strong pushing you're doing with your arms also activates the Serratus Anterior muscles, building those up as well.

Don't go down very far with this movement - it only requires about 6 to 8 inches range of motion. This will be very apparent when you start adding weight.

To come back up, squeeze your quads as though pushing up from a sissy squat. Remember to keep your midsection rock-solid when doing this exercise, from start to finish.

Note: a special thanks to Chris Shellberg for passing along his idea for a similar exercise, which led me to this one.



Using Weight

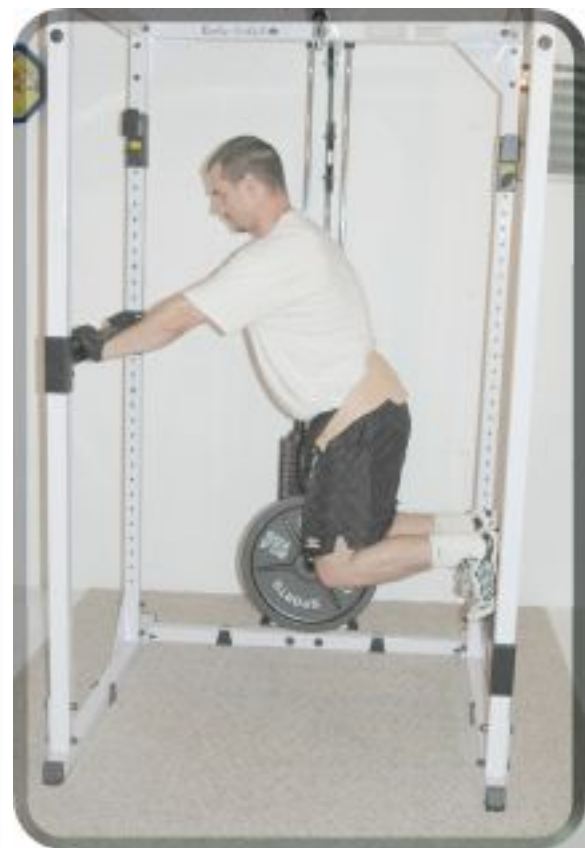
This exercise is good without weight but the real power of it comes shining through when you start adding weight to it. For this, you will need a hip belt and some weight plates. Be conservative when you start adding weight - experiment with what your body can take. The good thing is, if it starts to get to be too much, all you need to do is take a short step down off the safety rail.

The easiest way I've found to get the hip belt into position with weight is to first lean the weight up against the upright of the rack. Kneel down in front of it, put the belt around your lower back, loop the chain through the hole of the plate, then attach it to the other clip of the belt. Now stand up and you're ready to go. When you start using more and more plates, this technique makes it much easier. Plus, you can grip the upright to help get to the standing position.

Once you've got the weight set and are standing up with it, maneuver yourself to the same position as you were in without weight. Keep your abs tight from the moment you set your first foot up on the rail.

Lower yourself down slowly, clenching your abs as hard as you can. You will feel a tremendous amount of tension going through the abs when you add weight. As you get stronger, you can build up to some very heavy weights. I've gone as high as using four 45-lb plates with this exercise.

When you've completed your set, step down then kneel down beside the upright, leaning the weight plate(s) against it. Unclip the belt and you're done!



Common Errors

1. Not keeping the body stiff

It's extremely critical to keep the entire body stiff and straight when performing this exercise. Bend **ONLY** at the knees. If you allow the back to hunch or arch, it will put stress on the lower back.

2. Moving too quickly

This should be a slow, deliberate movement. If you move up and down quickly, the momentum will put a lot of stress on the lower back at the bottom of the exercise.

3. Not pushing hard with the arms or legs

Pushing with the arms and legs is what keeps the tension on your abs and keeps your body in position during the exercise. If you lose the pushing, your body position will fall apart and you won't be able to perform the exercise.

Tricks

1. How to arrange the plates when using very heavy weight

When you use the hip belt with one or two plates, you can comfortably do the exercise with the plates in between your thighs. As you start using more weight, you may find that you need to have your thighs too far apart to keep the most solid body position on the exercise. When you get to this point, keep your thighs close together and let the plates rest on the **FRONT** of your thighs. As you drop down, this will push them forward so that they're not in between your thighs, making your body more solid during the exercise.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball](#)

[Crunches](#)

[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

See-Saw Crunches

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise provides resistance from two different angles when doing a cable crunch exercise. Getting resistance from two angles allows you to use more weight and more fully work the abdominal area (both upper and lower).

How To Do It

This exercise is done using the cable crossover machine with single handles attached to each stack. You'll need one cable set as a high pulley and one cable set as a low pulley. Attach the single handles and set about double the weight on the high pulley as on the low pulley.

Stand just in front of the low pulley, facing away from it. Reach down and grab the low handle and step forward, facing the high pulley. The handle will be held behind your back, with your palm facing backwards.

Now lean forward and grab the high pulley handle. Pull the handle down and in so that your forearm is beside your head. Brace your head against your forearm firmly to lock it in place as best you can. At this point, your back arm will be pressed against your tailbone with your palm facing up so that your knuckles are against your tailbone. This hand will become the fulcrum or pivot point of the lever that we're about to make out of your body. You're about to become a human see-saw!

Crunch down, pulling the high pulley down as you would with a regular cable crunch. The low pulley will come up due to the position you've placed your body in. This gives you a see-saw movement as you're doing the crunch, getting you upwards tension (from the low pulley) and downwards tension (from the high pulley) on the abs at the same time. This pivoting action strongly works both the lower and upper abs at the same time.

Be very sure you're not just pulling down but actually feeling the back weight pulling up as well!

On your next set, switch hands so that your other hand is now behind you. This will ensure that you work both sides equally as the tension going through your midsection on this exercise is on a diagonal through your body, working the side abs as well.



Common Errors

1. Not setting the hand on the tailbone

If your hand is off to one side or not resting on your back anywhere, you won't get any pivoting action. You'll get no upwards resistance and the downward resistance will be lessened because the weight will be pulling backwards. Be sure that your hand is set firmly on your tailbone area.

2. Not using enough weight

This exercise can be done with heavy weight. If you're not using enough weight, you may not be getting enough resistance to feel the exercise working. If you don't feel it well, try adding some weight and try it again.

3. Only pulling down

It's important to feel the low pulley weight coming as you pull down. This is what gives you the dual resistance.



Proper hand position on tailbone

Tricks

1. Use the same weight on both pulleys

If you're looking to really work hard with this exercise, set the same amount of weight on both pulleys. Very challenging!

2. Go for power

This is an exercise that doesn't rely on finesse and trying to feel the contraction. You can (and I recommend it!) use brute force with this exercise to develop excellent power through the abs. It's a great exercise to go for power with as you won't get excessive torque on the lower back because the forces on your body are balanced, upwards and downwards.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Small Ball Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The Small Ball Crunch picks up where the regular Swiss Ball Crunch leaves off. The smaller ball surface provides a much greater stretch and results in a greater contraction of the abs. Also, the smaller ball increases the instability of the exercise, increasing the value.

How To Do It

Regular large ball crunches are an excellent exercise but you can dramatically increase their effectiveness by performing them on a much smaller ball.

How small of a ball do you use?

The ball I use for the exercise is somewhat larger than a basketball (you can actually use a basketball for this if you like though I prefer the softer ball). It is soft rubber and I got it at a department store toy department for two dollars. You can find balls like these at most department or toy stores. Note: if you get a toy ball, be sure it is fairly thick rubber. You don't want it to burst. Test it out at the store before you buy it.

- Set the ball on the floor and sit in front of it with your back up against it. Your knees will be bent and your feet flat on the floor.
- Roll yourself back over the ball, wrapping your back around the ball as you lay back. Note how the smaller ball not only increases the stretch on the

- abs, but doesn't support your body as much as the larger ball. This vastly increases the demands placed on the abs during the movement.
- Not only must your abs execute the crunch movement, they must also balance your torso to a far greater degree than with the larger ball.
 - Don't be surprised if you find your abs quivering as you do this, even if you are an advanced trainer. I have been doing this one for years and I still get the quivers if I haven't done it in awhile.
 - Get a full stretch back, rounding your back completely over the ball so your head is almost touching the ground. Crunch up slowly and squeeze your abs hard at the top.

- This is the start position for the Small Ball Crunch.
- Note how the back is wrapped around the ball to get the maximum stretch on the abdominal muscles.



- This is the top position of the exercise.
- Squeeze your abs hard at the top.
- Your abs will probably be quivering as you come up to this point.





- To make the exercise easier, you can adjust where you place yourself on the ball.
- Notice how the hips are lower and the ball is higher up on the back.
- This angle and placement not only removes some of your bodyweight from the exercise but gives you better leverage as well.



- To make the exercise harder, roll yourself further back on the ball.
- The ball will be closer down towards your hips and your torso will be on a decline.
- This decreases your leverage and forces your abs to work with more of your bodyweight.

- When you become strong enough at the above variation, you can try adding some weight to the exercise.
- Try holding a small weight plate above your head during the movement.
- You can also hold it over your chest.
- Be sure your ball is strong enough to take this extra weight!





- This picture gives you an idea of the size of ball I recommend.
- The plate beside the ball is a 45 pound Olympic plate.
- Basically, any smaller-sized ball will work as long as it's not way too small or so big that it's not really small anymore...

Common Errors

1. Not bending the back completely over the ball

One of the main benefits of this exercise is the full stretch of the abs when you wrap your back around the ball. Since the ball is smaller than the large Swiss Ball, you'll be able to get a far greater stretch on the small ball.

2. Crunching with your upper back on the ball

If the ball is set too high up on your back, e.g. up by your shoulder blades, the exercise will be easier. If you are looking for more of a challenge, the ball should be placed right above the waistband in the small of the back.

3. Using too small of a ball

A ball that is too small will simply dig into your back rather than allowing you to perform the exercise effectively. The approximate size of a basketball is what you're looking for.

Tricks

1. One foot on the ground

You can also do this exercise with only one foot on ground to increase instability. This increases the usefulness of the exercise by activating more of the stabilizing muscles of the core area. Hold your hands out wide for balance. Have your other leg out wide or crossed over the planted leg. Try to stay on top of the ball while you're doing the exercise (if you roll off, you're not very high up so you won't crash very hard).

2. Feet on the wall

This exercise can also be done with your feet set up on a wall at an angle. Set your ball fairly close to the wall. As you crunch up, push back against the wall with your feet. This gives an extra strong contraction in the abs. You should roll higher up on the ball when using this technique, getting an extra hard contraction in the abs. This exercise is very similar to the floor-based [Foot Resisted Crunches](#).



3. Roll with it

When doing the exercise, you can easily adjust the resistance by where the ball is contacting your back. The higher up on your back the ball is, the easier the exercise will be as you'll be supporting less of your bodyweight. The lower the ball is on your back, the harder the exercise will be as you'll be supporting more of your bodyweight. This means you can start the movement with the ball in your lower back, then as you fatigue, you can shift your position on the ball so that it contacts higher up on your back, making the exercise easier and allowing you to continue with the set. This amounts to a very dynamic style of drop set, in essence.

4. Add resistance

You can add resistance by holding a dumbbell or weight plate either on your chest or just above your head. When held above your head, it will be more likely to unbalance you and send you tipping backwards so be aware of your body position. Strive to drop your hips down lower when using added weight.

5. Increase instability

To really give your abs and balance a test, place your feet together on the floor so that they're touching instead of far apart. This will really challenge your balance and ab coordination. This dramatically reduces your base of support and you'll be shifting around a LOT more.

6. Use Power Breathing

This will greatly increase the intensity of the exercise. At the bottom of the exercise, lay back so far that your head is touching the ground. Take a deep breath in and allow your abs to relax. Now crunch up, exhaling as powerfully as you can through pursed lips (like you're trying to blow out a candle from across the room). Keep this up until you come all the way up and over. Squeeze hard and make sure you've exhaled everything. Lay back and repeat.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Lower Abs	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Rotational/Obliques	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Total Ab Exercises	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Exercise Update #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Extra Topics	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Foot-Resisted Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise allows you to add resistance to the crunch movement without actually having any actual resistance available to you. All you need is a wall or other solid surface!

How To Do It



This exercise is very straightforward. Lay flat on your back in front of a wall or underneath a solid rail or bar for pushing up against. When you are in the crunch position, raise your feet up and put them under that something solid so that you can push up or back against it. As you crunch up, push back hard with your feet for resistance.

The type of feeling that you're looking for is as though you're trying to use your feet to slide yourself backwards as you're crunching up. Unless you're on a slippery floor, you won't actually slide anywhere but that extra tension on the abs from pushing with your feet will add resistance to the crunch. This is ideal for when you're traveling or when you're working out at home and need some extra resistance on the crunch.

Common Errors

1. Not pushing hard enough

Be sure, when you're doing the movement, to push hard with your feet. You're not just setting them against something and holding them there. You want to really try hard to push against the surface to get that extra tension on the abs.

Tricks

1. Other ways to get resistance

Another way to get resistance on the crunch without adding any weights is to use your legs and arms. As you come to the top of the crunch, bring your legs up towards your chest. Push down on your thighs with your elbows and resist with your legs. Squeeze hard to get the extra contraction.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Ab Cannonballs

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise uses momentum and bodyweight to your advantage to allow you to place more stress on the abs rather than less, like you normally would when you use momentum.

How To Do It

You will be using a high pulley with this exercise, preferably a pulley that is just a pulley, not a full pulldown machine (it can be done on a pulldown machine but it's not as effective as the seat will stop your range of motion - don't remove the seat or it'll hurt even more!).

Set a bar on the high pulley as though you're doing regular cable crunches. Have the bar behind your head with a curl grip (your palms will be facing back). Place your feet slightly ahead of the bar position.

Use a fairly heavy weight for this one (start with about 3/4 of your bodyweight, until you get used to the exercise - you can work yourself up to using more than bodyweight once you understand how it's done). Holding the bar firmly just above your head, drop down fast (like a cannonball) until your butt is on the floor. As you drop down, cross your legs so you end up in a cross-legged position, sitting on the floor.

Let the momentum of your drop carry the weight down and crunch down quickly.. Contract your abs as hard as you can when you come down - this is the real benefit of the exercise right here. Hold this position for a few seconds then let yourself up slowly. Drop down and do it again.

What does this accomplish? It allows you to get into the fully contracted position of the abs with far more weight than you'd be able to use to get into position if you were trying to do a regular cable crunch. Your abs are capable of contracting with a lot more weight than your upper body is physically able to get into when doing the cable crunch position. The cannonball movement uses your body's momentum to help your abs get into that contracted position with more weight.

Be forewarned, you may have people asking what you're doing and looking at you funny (if you haven't already from all the other ab exercises in this book!) and you may have personal trainers coming up and telling you what you're doing wrong. If so, give them the explanation I just gave you - the momentum of the drop helps you get more weight into the contracted position of the abs, increasing the potential for contraction in the abs. Or tell them to go away. Whichever is easier! :)



Common Errors

1. Lowering rather than dropping

This is not a controlled descent. You want to drop down as quickly as you can to get enough momentum going to get the weight moving so that you can get into the crunches position with it. If you lower yourself rather than dropping, it's basically a cable crunch and you won't be able to use as much weight, meaning you'll get less of a contraction in the abs.

2. Not holding the contraction at the bottom

The real value of this exercise is not the cannonball, it's the position that you are able to get the abs into at peak contraction. Hold this position for as long as you can when you've dropped to the ground. If you let up right away, you won't get the same effect.

Tricks

1. Jump up before you drop down

When you get to using near or even over your bodyweight, you may need to actually jump up in the air before you drop down to get enough momentum going to actually get the weight down into position. It doesn't have to be a high jump but you'll need that extra bit of momentum to get it going.

2. Get help

When using heavier weights, have a spotter help push you down to give your body that extra momentum to get into position.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[**Bonuses**](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Bench Press Crunches

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

If one of your training goals is to improve your bench press lockout power, this exercise is ideal for you. It will build up your abdominals specifically for the top range of motion of the bench press.

How To Do It

This is a simple exercise to set up and do. It can be done on a regular bench press bench, using either a barbell or dumbbells.

Start with a light to moderate weight to get used to the exercise. Use a shoulder-width grip for this exercise (like you're doing a close-grip bench press). If you use a regular wider bench press grip, your arms may fatigue before your abs are fully worked.

Unrack the weight (or get the dumbbells into the top position) and lock out your elbows. Hold the weight at the top position and keep it there. Now do a powerful crunch movement, trying to raise your head and upper back off the bench as high as you can as though trying to push the bar towards the ceiling. Be sure your feet are solidly planted when you do the crunch.

Squeeze hard at the top and hold it for a second or two. Lower yourself back down slowly, working the negative. Relax at the bottom for a moment then crunch up for the next rep.

This exercise helps to increase lockout and bench press power by giving you another weapon in your pressing power. Most people only use their abs in the bench press for stabilization (or not at all). When your abs are trained with this exercise, you'll be able to use your abs to help push the weight up and achieve lockout with heavier weights. As you come to the top of the bench press movement, you can activate your abs, just like when you were crunching up doing this exercise, giving the bar a little more upwards momentum to help you get your elbows locked out.

This technique can help you lift more weight in your bench press almost immediately.



Common Errors

1. Not keeping the elbows locked

When doing this exercise, hold the lockout position. If you bend the elbows and use your chest, it

will take tension off the abs and reduce the effect of the exercise. Our goal here is to force the abs to move the weight and thus to train them to help as much as possible with the top of the press movement. If you want to try a few reps to practice the lockout technique as explained above, that's fine. Just be sure to do the majority of reps with your elbows locked out for best results.

2. Rocking up and down

This movement should be done with a hard contraction, not by rocking up and down and using momentum to keep the weight moving. If you find you have a tendency to rock like this, use the power rack as explained below (bottom start). It will remove all rocking from this exercise by removing all hint of momentum.

Tricks

1. Incline and decline

To work different aspects of the abs, you can also do this exercise on both the incline and decline bench. The incline bench will work more of the upper ab area. The decline bench will allow you to work more of the lower ab area.

2. Use a power rack and do bottom-start crunches starting without tension

For a different effect, set the safety rails in the power rack just slightly below the lockout point of your bench press. Do the crunch the same as above but in between reps, set the weight down on the safety rails and release all the tension in the abs. At the start, lock your elbows and then explode upwards into the crunch. Starting without any tension in the abs will force you to work harder and develop more explosive strength for that final lockout kick when doing the bench press.

This version can be done with the regular bench press grip.

Different from most bottom-start movements, you will actually be able to use a LOT more weight when doing this variation. It will feel as though you are "taking a run at it" when you go up into the crunch. This momentum and power will allow you

to use much heavier weights. Don't be afraid to experiment to see how much you can handle. Your abs will benefit from it!

Be sure that you **ONLY** do this version in a rack. It is not recommended to use a regular bench press setup, working off the weight racks.

Note the position of the safety rails in the pictures to the right as compared to the position in the pictures for the normal performance of the exercise.



3. Lie on the floor

This exercise can also be performed in the rack laying on the floor rather than on a bench. This gives the exercise a somewhat different feel - you will feel more solid with it, since you don't have to balance yourself on a bench. It's a good variation and worth trying at least to see if you prefer it to doing the exercise on a bench.



4. Lie on the floor and do a leg raise too

For an extra dimension of resistance on the abs, you can combine this exercise with a leg raise movement. Start by doing the leg raise first then hold your legs up in the vertical position (legs straight or bent 90 degrees) while you do the bench press crunch. This hits

your abs with tension from the opposite direction as you're doing the bench press crunch. Very effective!

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Between-The-Legs Low Pulley Crunches

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

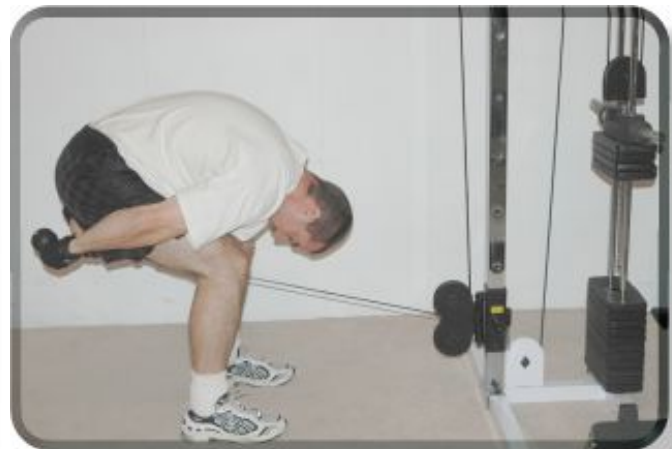
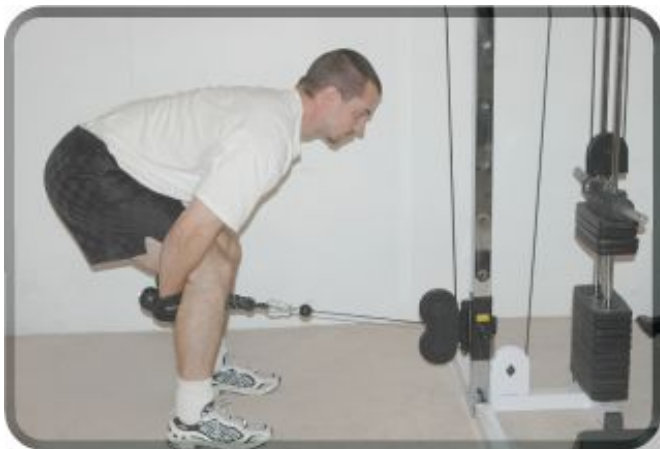
This exercise places maximum tension on the abs at their maximum anatomically-possible contracted position. This carves great detail into the upper abs.

How To Do It

You'll have your head pointed towards the weight stack and you'll be using the low pulley with a rope or bar attachment. The rope attachment works better for this exercise though the bar will be okay, too.

Bend over in front of the pulley (knees bent) and step over the top of the rope so that it's between your feet (or bar so that it's behind your knees). Reach down behind you (on the outsides of your legs) and grasp the rope handles. Bring the rope/bar back like a kickback until your arms are fairly straight, then lock them into that position and keep them there throughout the movement.

Look up towards the weight stack - your back should be flat or have a slight arch. Now do a very short backwards pushing motion with the abs, like a mini crunch. Your body position has already placed your abs in their most anatomically-possible contracted position. Even just holding the weight in that position strongly works the abs. When you give the short push in this position, you're going to get a lot of resistance on the abs in their peak contraction position.



Common Errors

1. Pulling instead of pushing

When you do the exercise, focus on pushing backwards with the abs on the rope rather pulling with the abs. The pushing focus will hit your abs differently than pulling - it's a very different feeling.

2. Not locking out the arms

Keep the arms fairly straight and don't allow the elbows to bend as you're pushing backwards. You don't want the triceps taking tension off the abs as you're doing the short crunching movement.

3. Not straightening out the arms between your legs

The real key with this exercise is to be absolutely sure your arms are not bent and set forward quite a lot (like you're starting a pulling movement with your arms). Bent arms will decrease the power of the exercise.

Tricks

1. Use a short, powerful pumping movement

Don't do this one slowly and deliberately - it should be a quick, powerful pumping movement. Since the range of motion is so short, there's no advantage in going slowly and trying to feel the exercise over the full range of motion. By using a short, powerful movement, you'll be able push the rope back further, getting a more powerful contraction on the upper abs, which is where the real value of the exercise lies.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Cross Bench Stretched Crunches

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise is perfect for hitting the other half of the range of motion that floor crunches miss. This is the range where your spine is flexed backwards and your abdominals are in a stretched position.

Traditional crunches that are done with your back flat on the floor don't allow for maximum spinal flexion, thereby limiting the useful range of motion of the exercise.

How To Do It

- A flat bench is used for this exercise.
- Your body will be perpendicular to the bench during the movement.
- Lie down across the bench with your lower back completely supported and your feet on the ground. Your upper body will be hanging over the edge from the mid-back up.
- Hold your arms so that your elbows are pointing forward over your face and your hands are near the top of your head.
- Arch down backwards (don't go too far - just get a good stretch) then crunch back up.
- You can hold weight in your hands once you get stronger but be careful with your back - make sure it is always supported.
- With any stretched crunch, don't cradle your hands behind your head. Your neck flexibility will then limit how much stretch you can put on your abs. Hold your hands over your head at arm's length for the best stretch.



Common Errors

1. Stretching too far

Do not stretch so far back down or you will risk injury to your back. If you can see the floor directly behind you, you have gone too far. Only do this exercise if your lower back is not injured or sensitive. The stretch position can be hard on the back if it is in a weakened state.

2. Going too fast

This exercise should be done slowly and deliberately. Done at a slow pace, it is quite safe for the back. Done quickly and using excessive momentum, it can be very dangerous to the back.

3. Improper position on the bench

The placement of your body on the bench is critical to the safety and effectiveness of this exercise. Your lower back from the area just above your waistband to your midback should be supported on the bench.

- Placing your upper back on the bench will limit your stretch and decrease the tension on your abs, but it will make the exercise easier on your lower back.
- Placing your glutes on the bench will send too much of your upper body over the edge of the bench, putting pressure on your lower back and throwing off your balance. This imbalance may cause you to tip over backwards.

Tricks

1. The Swiss Ball Crunch

If you have access to a *Swiss Ball* you can do stretched crunches on that instead of a bench.

- The execution is the same but it is much easier on your lower back and has the added bonus of making you stabilize yourself during the movement.
- Don't anchor your feet when you do this exercise as that will decrease the valuable instability and activate the hip flexors.
- You can roll the ball back for a bigger stretch, forward to make it easier, or to the sides to work the obliques. Practice rolling around a little while crunching to get a feel for how ball movement affects abdominal involvement.

An excellent variation of the Swiss Ball Crunch is the [Small Ball Crunch](#). This is done using a much smaller, inflatable ball, e.g. around 16 to 24 inches in diameter. The smaller ball increases the instability of the exercise, forces your abs to support more of your

bodyweight and increases the amount of stretch placed on the abs.

Most children's toy stores or sporting goods stores have small, inflatable balls. Look for one that has thick rubber as you will be resting much of your bodyweight on it. Test it in the store before you bring it home.

2. How to add resistance

The simplest way to add resistance is to hold a weight plate or a dumbbell. Hold the weight either close behind your head with your arms bent (harder) or on your chest (easier).

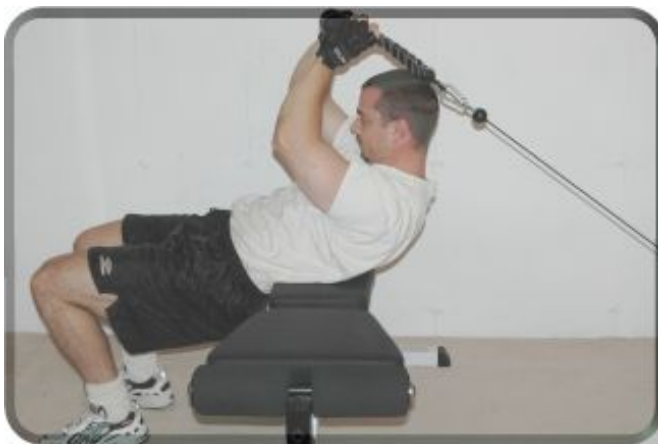
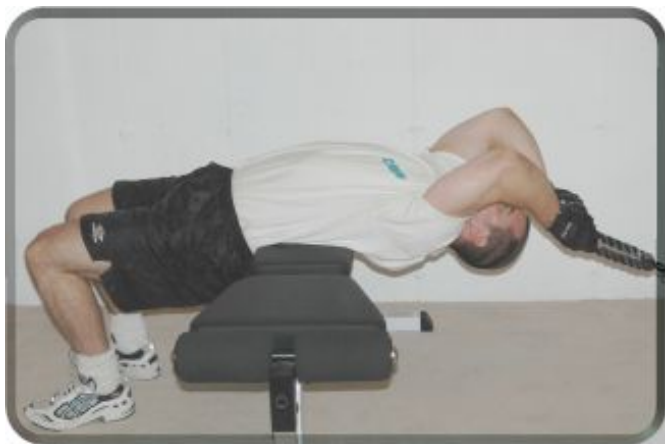
Holding the weights this way will minimize shoulder and lower back stress. You may wish to have someone hand you the weight but you will normally not be using so much weight that you'll need someone to hand it to you.



Using a low pulley cable can be even better for adding resistance because you will get tension as you are moving horizontally, not just vertically. Set your bench up so that your head is pointing to the low pulley then reach back and grasp it. Start very light when first using the cable.

There is more tension at the fully contracted position with cables. Because of this, continue the movement all the way up until your upper body is almost vertical.

- Use a bar, rope, two handles, or grip on the sides of a single handle.
- Get a good stretch and suck in your gut. At the stretch position, take a deep breath to expand your rib cage. Drop your hips down then crunch up and over the bench.
- At the top, only your lower back should be in contact with the bench and you will look like you're nearly in a sitting position (though you'll be squatting). Squeeze hard at the top then breathe in and out a few times while squeezing to really get a burn going.



A good way to spot yourself on this variation is a technique I call Body Ratcheting.

- When you get to the sticking point, raise your legs off the ground like a leg raise, lock your arms and abs, then allow the momentum of your legs dropping to carry the weight to the next point. You can continue this all the way through the movement. The only limit here is how much your abs can take.
- You can also change the force curve of this exercise by moving the bench further away or closer to the stack.

3. Self-spotting

- You can spot yourself by holding a weight plate or dumbbell.
- Hold the weight over head or in front of your chest during the stretch phase.
- Holding the weight will make it harder at the stretch but it will allow you to give yourself forced reps as you come to the contraction.
- Bring the weight overhead in a pullover movement and hold it in front of you as a counterbalance. This lets gravity help you crunch up.
- Move the weight back overhead when you go back down to the stretch position.

4. Feet up

A very advanced variation of this movement entails keeping your feet off the ground for the duration of the movement. This should only be attempted by advanced trainers with both strong abdominal and lower back muscles.



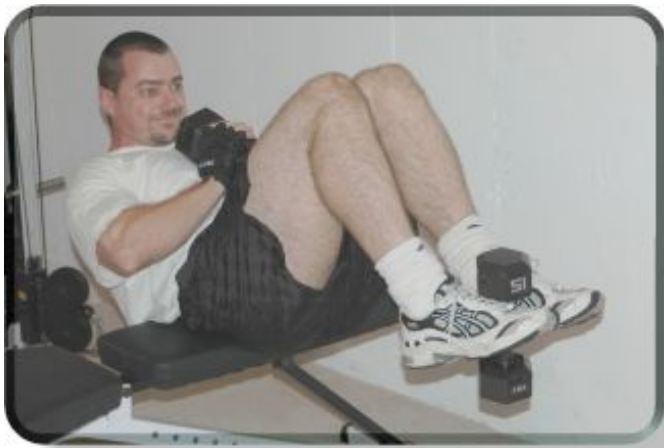
- Balance is the key issue in this variation and will require a lot of practice to get right.
- You should place yourself slightly higher on the bench because your legs are no longer balancing on the ground.
- This will vary according to your own personal weight distribution but a good rule of the thumb is that the front edge of the bench should be about 1 to 2 inches below your waistband.
- As far as the movement goes, you should raise your legs up towards your chest slightly as you crunch your upper body up.
- This will counterbalance your changing weight distribution. If you don't raise your legs, you will tip forward.
- Keep your abs tight throughout the exercise and don't stretch back quite as far as with the feet-on-the-ground version. A little below horizontal is fine.
- Above all, take this one slowly and be careful!

5. Feet up and holding weights - most advanced

Once you've mastered the above variation, you're ready to add some resistance to the exercise. This is a very challenging variation of the exercise and will take your abdominal strength and balance to the limits.

This movement does take practice and will require an idea of how much weight to use and where to position yourself on the bench. To give you a frame of reference, I've done this exercise very effectively using 20 lbs held between my feet and 35 lbs held on my chest. This weight ratio seems to balance the distances the weights are at from your pivot point in the middle quite effectively. If you were using a 5 lb dumbbell between your feet, trying using a 10 lb dumbbell on your chest.

Now when you do the exercise, as above, do your crunch up and leg raise at same time, taking care not to let the dumbbell slip from between your feet. Your abs will be screaming for mercy with all



the movement itself as well as all the supporting and balancing required to even hold the weights in position.

If you find the weights slipping or your abs failing, move the weight you're holding over your chest directly over your stomach rather than dropping the weight between your feet first. If you drop the weight between your feet first, you may fall backwards because of the extra weight on your chest - that's why you're better off moving that first.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Crunch Roll-Ups

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is an intense peak contraction exercise for the abs (even better than cable crunches for getting a peak contraction).

It is a good exercise to finish the abs, as it will not give you much resistance except at the top contracted position of the movement. This exercise can help you put the finishing touches on your abdominals by helping you bring out the details in your midsection.

How To Do It

- Lie on your back and bring your knees up to about a 90 degree angle. Lock your fingers together behind your knees.
- Start the movement by kicking your legs forward.
- When your legs are near vertical, rock/roll up using this momentum and pull in with your hands until your chest is up against your thighs.
- Your upper body and thighs should be vertical and touching, pulling in with your hands and contracting your abs as hard as you can. This is the maximum contraction your abs are capable of.
- You will be balancing on your glutes only. It will take some practice to get the momentum and balance just right so that you don't spill forward too far or don't get up far enough.
- Roll back down on your back then, using momentum, roll back up to vertical. By rolling up and pulling in, you get your abs to a point where they cannot go by strength alone.
- The movement should look as though it has two parts: your legs roll up then stop at vertical then your upper body follows and gets pulled up and in.



Common Errors

1. Too much or not enough momentum

If you pull or roll yourself up too hard, you will roll forward and your feet will touch the floor or you will lose tension in your abs. If you don't pull or roll up enough, you will not get as much tension as possible on your abs. It will take practice to get the timing and balance right, but the contraction you'll get in your abs is worth it!

2. Not squeezing the abs

The only effective part of this exercise is at the top during the contraction. Squeeze it for all it's worth. Not squeezing the abs at the top will make this exercise essentially useless.

Tricks

1. Pop a balloon

At the top, imagine that you're trying to pop a balloon between your thighs and chest. It almost looks as though you're trying to roll up all the way to a sitting position but can't quite make it.

2. Hitting the sides

To hit your sides as well, hook your hands behind only one leg and roll up. Another way is to roll around unevenly. Throw your weight around to the sides so that you move in a variety of directions. It will look as though you are Breakdancing. This does make it more difficult to balance, however.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Decline Cable Crunches

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

While this exercise has a very short range of motion, you can use very heavy weight to maximize the development of the upper abdominals.

How To Do It

This is a very simple exercise to set up and to execute. Set the decline bench in front of a low pulley with the low end down by the low pulley. If you have an adjustable bench, you can set it to pretty much any angle and the exercise will be effective. Different angles on the bench will work different angles on the abs.

Lie on the decline bench and grasp a bar attachment behind your head. Now crunch up against the resistance from the low pulley. Be sure the bench is set far enough away from the low pulley so that the weight stack is not resting on the bottom when you start the movement.

As you start the movement, inhale deeply at the stretch then forcefully contract the abs down as you're crunching up. You can use very heavy resistance with this one as the angle and mechanism of resistance allow for a very good mechanical advantage with very little back stress (**since you're upside down, the resistance actually decompresses the spine rather than placing torque on it**, which is a tremendous advantage over most weighted ab exercises).



Common Errors

1. Bench is set too close to the pulley

If the bottom end of the bench is too close to the pulley, the weight will set down in between reps, you'll then lose the resistance on the abs and you won't get a full stretch on the abs at the bottom of the exercise.

2. Coming up too high

This movement is not a movement where you can come up very high on the crunch part, especially when you're using heavier weight. If your upper back comes off the bench, you're coming up too high and the weight may put some torque on your lower back.

Tricks

1. Decline push crunch

Instead of holding the bar behind your head, bring the bar in front of you (the cable will run over one shoulder) with your arms locked out. Try to push the bar forward and up from there. This will give you a very different feel of tension on your abs.



2. Focus on the negative

This is an excellent exercise to do negative-accentuated training for the abs. You can use a very powerful, quick movement to get to the top of the crunch, then fight the negative all the way down. To do this, once you're at the top of the movement, try to hold it there for as long as you can and then keep trying to crunch up as the weight pulls you back down. You can even do negative-only training by having a spotter pull the weight up with you as you come up, then letting go so that the negative is all you.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Declined Body Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This bodyweight exercise targets the extreme upper abdominals, right along the bottom edge of the rib cage. If you're looking for an exercise to build up this area, this is the one for you. It's an excellent one for martial artists and combat sports participants looking to build up the area around the solar plexus.

How To Do It

Start in a regular crunch position with your heels on the floor close to your butt. Now push your hips up using your glutes. Only your upper back and feet should be on the floor. The body from the knees to the neck should be perfectly stiff and straight. Your body will resemble a decline bench in position.

Crunch up, keeping your upper back on the floor and your hips up in this position. This angle is almost like a preacher bench for your abs. You will feel it right under the rib cage. Activating the hip extensors (glutes) and completely extending the hips also negates the hip flexors in this movement because they'll be fully stretched out and unable to contract and contribute to the movement.

Squeeze your upper abs very hard at the top of the movement for a few seconds then repeat.



This is an excellent exercise for those working out without equipment who would like to hit the extreme upper abs - usually that's only possible with cable exercises and the angles that are possible with cables. The angle this exercise places your body at hits the area nicely.

To really get the most out of this exercise, however, I highly recommend adding resistance.

To add resistance, the best method is to hold two dumbbells at arms-length directly above you (as though you just finished a close-grip bench press with dumbbells). Keep your hips pushed up as high as you can during the movement. Now try and push the dumbbells up towards the ceiling as you crunch up. It's an extremely short range of motion but the added weight in this position really adds a new dimension of tension to the abs. There is no other ab exercise that duplicates this tension in this area.

With regular use, this exercise can help you develop the appearance of an 8-pack!



Common Errors

1. Letting the body bend

It's extremely important, in order to get the proper angle on the abs, to keep your body from your knees to your neck stiff and straight. Keep your hips up high towards the ceiling throughout the movement. Keeping your body in this position also works the abs isometrically, improving the effectiveness of the exercise.

2. Using only one dumbbell for resistance

It is much easier to use two dumbbells when adding resistance to this exercise. Holding only one dumbbell with two hands places uneven stress on the abs and makes the exercise awkward to perform properly. Stick with two dumbbells for the best results.

Tricks

1. Hit the side abs

To hit your side abs right on the rib cage, do these resting on one leg only. For example, if you want to hit your right side, rest on your right foot only and lay your left leg down on the floor (just open your hips up with your leg bent, resting your left leg on the ground). Keep your body straight but tilted down to the left with hips still up in the air. Put your right arm beside your head and put your left hand on your right side abs to feel for how to get the best contraction. Crunch up. Do one side then switch to the other side. Rolling over onto your opposite shoulder as you come up puts more tension on the abs as well.

2. Add resistance to really build the area

To add resistance, you can hold a cable behind your head but, by far the best method is to hold two dumbbells at arms-length directly above you. Keep your hips pushed up as high as you can during the movement. Now try and push the dumbbells up towards the ceiling as you crunch up. It's an extremely short range of motion but the added weight in this position really adds a new dimension of

tension to the abs. There is no other ab exercise that duplicates this tension in this area.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise puts a tremendous stretch on the upper abs and the entire rib cage area, helping to develop not only the abs but the intercostal muscles that aid in breathing (excellent for sports that require great lung capacity). Working against resistance allows you to build great strength with the abs stretched.

How To Do It

All you need is an incline bench and a pair of dumbbells to perform this exercise. If you can adjust the incline, set it to about 30 to 45 degrees (you can adjust this to your preference after working with the exercise a bit).

You will use 2 dumbbells for this exercise - start fairly light until you get an idea of how to get into position and do the exercise. You can work up to some fairly heavy

dumbbells as you get stronger and more used to the exercise. You can also use one dumbbell for this exercise but it takes a little more coordination - start with 2 dumbbells to get used to the exercise first. I will explain how to use one dumbbell in the "Tricks" section below.

Set the 2 dumbbells on either side of the incline bench, beside the seat. Straddle the bench, reach down and pick up 1 dumbbell and rest it on the seat. Lean over and pick up the other and set it on the seat. If you have a fully adjustable incline bench, be sure the seat is up at an angle and not flat - you will need to stabilize yourself with your legs for this exercise and a flat seat won't allow enough stabilizing pressure to be exerted. If your bench has a fixed, you're already set.

Now sit on the incline face of the bench about a foot up from the seat. Pick up the dumbbells in your hands and let them hang at your sides. Set your feet on top of the incline bench seat one at a time, then lean back and lay on the bench. The top of the bench should be hitting about right between the shoulder blades. Your higher upper back area must be off the top end in order to get movement in this exercise.

Now that you're lying back, let the dumbbells hang down behind and below you. You should feel them pulling your shoulders down, putting a stretch on your abs. Lean yourself backwards, arching your back over the end of the bench to get a good stretch on the abs, puffing your chest out. You should



feel a stretch on the rib cage as well.

Now crunch upwards and forwards as high up and forward as you can with a crunching movement, pulling the dumbbells up as you crunch. The dumbbells hanging below you provide the resistance. The range of motion is short but you can add a tremendous amount of resistance without putting strain on the lower back. There is a bit of pressure on your upper back where you lean back over the top edge of the bench, but it's not traumatic or injurious in any way. It may be a bit uncomfortable when you start using very heavy weight.



Get a good stretch then perform a powerful crunch, exhaling hard as you come up to maximize tension on the abs and intercostals (the muscles between your ribs). Lower down slowly, get a good stretch again, then repeat.

The only limit on this exercise will be how much weight you can hold in your hands!

Common Errors

1. Sitting too high or too low on the bench

If you sit too low, your upper back won't be over the top edge enough and you won't get enough tension or range of motion in the exercise. If you're too high, you will get too much pressure on the upper back with the dumbbells pulling you down and back. I would recommend setting yourself on the bench without any weight to get a feel for where you need to be before you even start the exercise with weight.

2. Not stretching back

Much of the value of this exercise is when you lean back over the top edge of the bench and let the dumbbells stretch your rib cage backward and downward. If you don't let the stretch happen, you decrease the power of the exercise.

3. Going too fast

This is not a rapid, pumping exercise. The movement should be slow and deliberate, especially on the way down. You can crunch upwards powerfully but don't bounce out of the stretch position.

Tricks

1. Adjust the incline

You can adjust how the exercise works the abs by adjusting the angle of incline on the bench. Just be aware, the lower the incline, the harder it will be to get off the bench holding the dumbbells, especially when using heavier dumbbells.

2. Using one dumbbell

Get into position while holding one dumbbell in one hand. Lean back into position and bring it around behind and below. Grab on with the other hand as well. This will increase the stretch on the abs by pulling your arms closer together behind you.

Other ways to get into position are to set a flat bench behind the incline bench and set the dumbbell on end on top of it or simply have someone hand you the dumbbell once you're already in position.

3. Incline Bench Barbell Crunches

Set the incline bench in the power rack then set the safety rails on the rack to about knee height (you will most likely need to adjust this when you get on the bench and try the exercise). Get into position on the bench then reach back and grasp the barbell. You may need to grab one side and lift it up then lean over and grab on to the other side and lift that up if the barbell is set lower than you can reach at the same time with both hands. The execution of the exercise is exactly the same but the barbell locks your arms into position more. You can also adjust where on the barbell you grab (closer or further out).



[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Leg Curl Machine Crunches

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise allows you to instantly and easily add resistance to the crunch movement using the leg curl machine.

How To Do It

Lie on your back on the leg curl bench with your feet by the end where your head normally goes and your head down by the ankle pads (if your leg curl bench is too short, this exercise may not be practical for you). Hold your arms overhead and either grasp the ankle pad of the leg curl machine overhead (if that's uncomfortable loop a towel around the ankle pad and hold onto the towel) or brace your arms against the surface of the ankle pad. Now crunch up, pulling the ankle pad up with you for resistance.

When you first do this exercise, set the resistance to the lowest level to get the feel for it and how best to position and move during the exercise. If the track of the machine isn't quite right, you may have to move your hands down behind your head during the exercise, as you pull the ankle pads up. You can set the ankle pad about halfway down on the adjustment bar (or more) for a better angle.

When you're using heavy weight, start the movement explosively. This will help you to get the weight moving and build explosive power in your abs.

If you find you get any stress on your lower back as you do the movement, let the weight stack rest in between reps to take pressure off the back.



Common Errors

1. Improper positioning on the bench

Proper positioning is something that greatly depends on the shape of the machine, the position of the ankle pads, how the lever arm works and how tall you are. Basically, start with a light weight and adjust where you lay on the bench and where the ankle pad is set on the lever arm until you feel comfortable with the movement. This will take some experimentation on your part.

2. Using too much arm movement

Be sure you're using the abs to do the crunch and not doing a pullover movement. Try to keep your shoulders locked into the same position unless the way your leg curl machine is constructed requires some shoulder movement as you do the exercise.

Tricks

1. Doing negatives

If you have a partner, you can do negative reps by having your partner lift the ankle pad up to you in the top position of each. Lower slowly, fighting the negative on the way down. If you'd like to do negatives on your own, use a pullover movement to get the weight into position. Crunch up to the top without bringing the weight with you, do a quick pullover with the weight, then lower it slowly.

2. Hook your heels

You can hook your heels over the lead edge of the chest pad in order to take out the hip flexors, as this keeps you from sliding backwards towards the ankle pad.

3. Start the ankle pad a little higher

If find you have to reach back too much to get the weight started, try using a pin-pulling resetting technique to allow the pad to start higher up. Pull the pin out of the weight stack, move the ankle pad up to where you want to start, then put the pin back in at the desired weight.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Partner Resisted Crunches

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

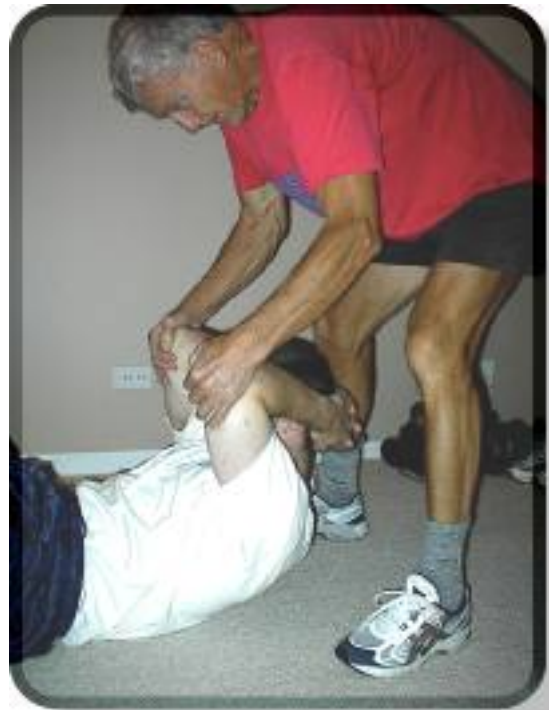
This exercise is great for increasing the resistance and the benefit of the standard crunch by focusing on the negative aspect of the crunch with great resistance. The only downside is that it does require a partner to execute.

How To Do It

This exercise is very simple to execute but is extremely effective for working the negative portion of the crunch.

- Lie down in regular crunch position with your hands behind or beside your head and your elbows pointed up.
- Your partner will be standing so that he/she is straddling your head and facing towards your feet.
- Crunch up to the top position on your own power as you regularly would.
- At this point, your partner will pull back on your elbows while you resist the pull and try to stay crunched at the top position.
- Fight it all the way down to the bottom. At the bottom, your partner will release tension and you will crunch back up to the top and do it

- again.
- This technique gives you a negative crunch movement.



Common Errors

1. Pulling too hard or not hard enough

If your partner pulls down too hard you will lose all tension in your abs because your head will get driven into the floor (do this exercise on a mat). Not pulling hard enough will result in ineffective tension on the abs.

2. Not breathing

You should let your breath out through pursed lips as you are fighting the negative. Holding your breath will dramatically increase your blood pressure and is not recommended.

Tricks

1. Assistance

Along with pulling you down, your partner can also assist by pushing you up and getting you to a

higher crunched position. This will give you a greater range of motion to fight the negative. This is also useful towards the end of the set when you can barely lift yourself up into the top of the regular crunch!

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs 	Lower Abs 
Rotational/Obliques 	Total Ab Exercises 
Exercise Update #1 	Extra Topics 

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Pushdown Crunches to the Floor

All Training Levels

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

If you're looking for an extremely intense contraction in the upper abs against resistance, this exercise is what you need. It places the majority of its tension on the abs in their most contracted position. It also hits the abs with a pushing movement rather than a pulling movement.

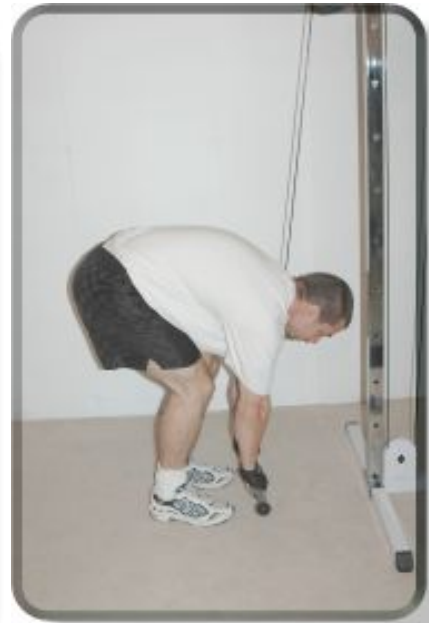
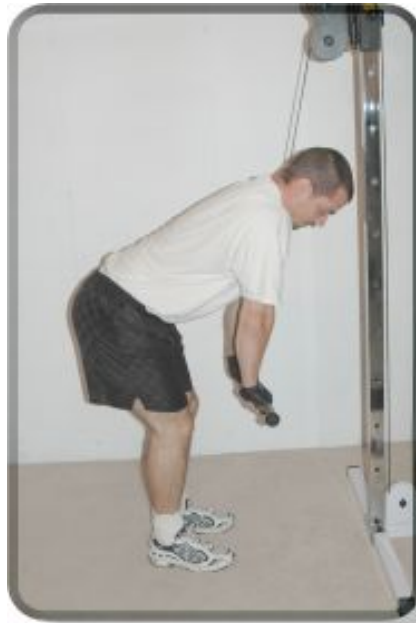
How To Do It

This exercise is performed very much like a cable crunch combined with a pushdown.

Set up this exercise by clipping a bar attachment onto a high pulley. Stand in position as you normally would for a pushdown. Get the bar to the bottom of the regular pushdown position. Lean forward into the cable, pushing your torso into the cable, setting your head either to the left or right side of the cable so that the cable is running down one side of your neck. This will allow you to keep your body closer to the line of resistance, minimizing torque on the lower back.

Lock the elbows, and arch your back a little for the start position. From this point, keep your arms fully extended and locked out straight down and then just try and push the bar right down to the floor or as close to it as you can. Bend at the waist and the knees as you come down and push it hard. Squeeze your abs hard at the bottom. To get the best contraction, be sure not to move your feet while doing the exercise.

Get the negative as you let your body come up slowly, fighting the weight on the way up. Switch the side of your head that the cable is on every two or three reps to balance the tension on your abs.



Common Errors

1. Not coming down far enough

It's important to try and push the bar if not all the way to the floor, at least as close to it as you can. The further down you can get the bar, the better the contraction you'll get on the abs.

2. Not locking the elbows

This exercise, while having the word "pushdown" in it, has really nothing to do with a tricep pushdown. Once you're at the bottom of the pushdown, lock your elbows and push to the ground using your abs.

3. Standing too far away from the pulley

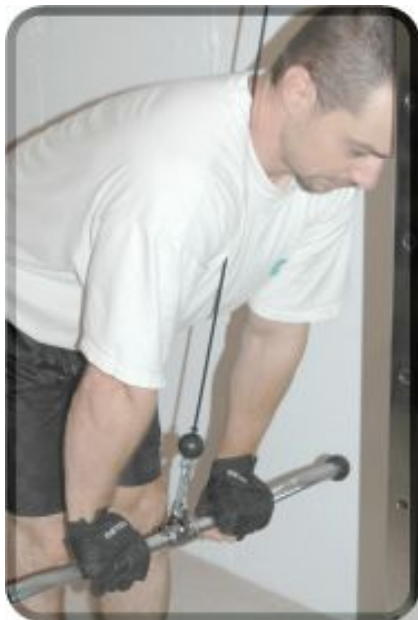
If you stand too far back, the line of pull of the resistance will be at too much of an angle rather than straight down. This will put unnecessary torque on the lower back while not substantially increasing the effectiveness of the exercise.

4. Letting the weight up too quickly

Be sure to take the movement slowly on the way up. Rather than just releasing the tension and allowing the weight to pull your body up quickly, try to slow it down and control the weight.

5. Not putting your head to one side of the cable

For this exercise to be most effective and least stressful on the lower back, you need to let the cable run down the side of your neck. If you just keep the cable in front of you, it puts torque on your lower back when you start to get into heavier weights. Also, be sure to switch sides every few reps to get a balanced workload on the abs.



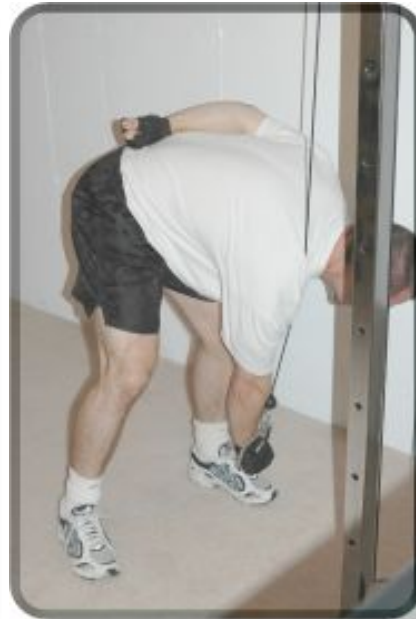
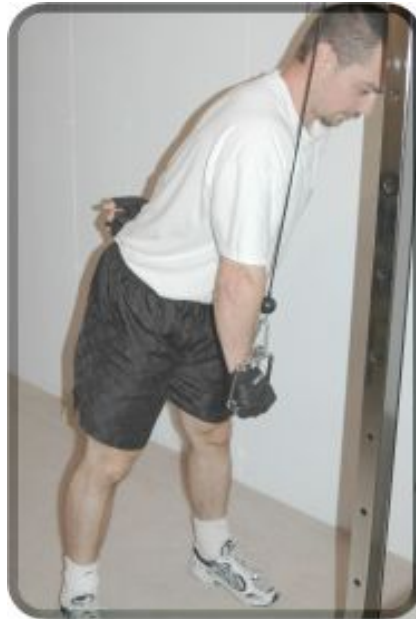
Tricks

1. Hitting the sides

Use a single handle instead of a regular bar. When you push it down, bring it down to the opposing foot. This will strongly hit the obliques. When you get near the floor, you can go in front of or behind the foot (experiment to see which works better for you). You can either switch hands after a few reps or you can do an entire set on one side then an entire set on the other side.

2. Do a small pulsing movement at the bottom

When you've pushed the bar close to the floor and finished the downward movement, let it up a few inches then push it back down. Repeat this a few times with a short pulsing movement to really peak the contraction on the abs.



3. Wear a dip belt to hold yourself down

If you find that you're able to use more weight for your abs on this exercise but your upper body isn't heavy enough to allow you to get into position easily, then this trick will instantly increase your bodyweight and anchor you down, allowing you to use far more weight on the exercise, and with better form. Basically, all you need to do is wear a dip belt loaded

with 25 lb weight plates (35's and 45's are too large and will probably hit the ground as you push down). Hang a few of these from the belt around your waist and you can instantly increase your body mass to allow you to use more weight with better form.

4. Use a short, powerful push as you get near the bottom

You can use a little momentum and give a short, powerful push as you get near the bottom in order to get the bar further down with heavier weight. When you've got it further down, don't let it pop back up. Try your best to hold it down and only let it up slowly to take full advantage of the short push.

5. If you don't have a cable to use

This exercise can also be duplicated using a chin-up bar or other solid object and an elastic exercise band. Simply loop the band around the object, stand in front of it and push down to the ground just like with the cable version.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Seated Swiss Ball Crunches

All Training Levels



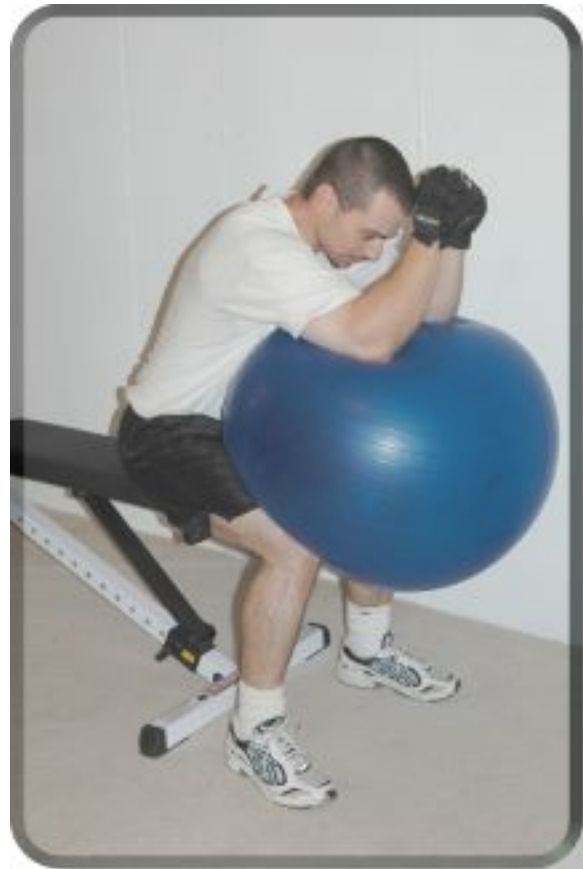
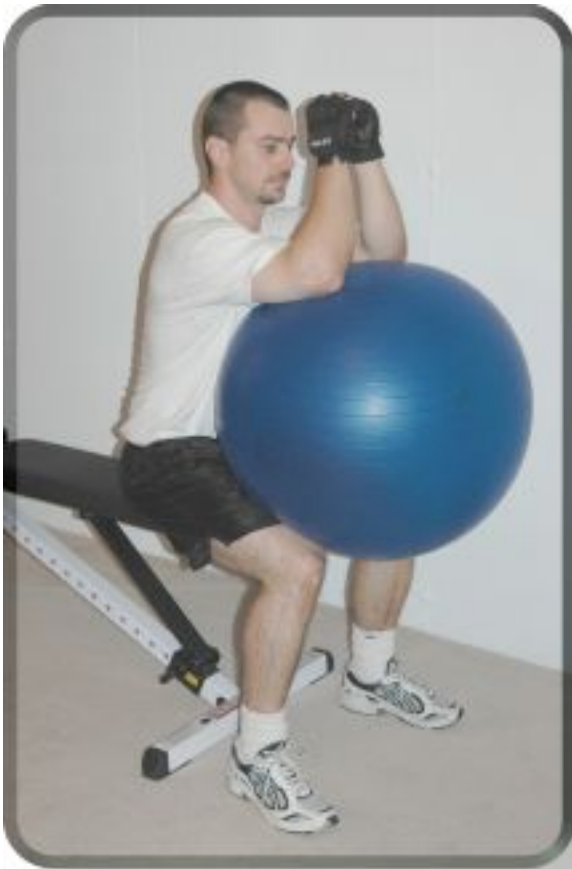
Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise uses the Swiss Ball not as something to lie on or roll over but as the resistance itself! It provides an excellent contraction in the upper abs even though it only allows for a short range of motion.

How To Do It

To perform this exercise, all you will need is a bench or chair and a Swiss Ball (the big inflatable exercise ball). It's not difficult to do. Sit on the bench with the ball resting on your thighs. Place your elbows on top of the ball. Now try to push your elbows down towards your knees. The ball will resist the pressure, giving you direct resistance against the abs. Hold the pressure for several seconds, pushing down as hard as you can and squeezing your abs as hard as you can.

This is an excellent exercise for those who want to get a solid upper ab contraction similar to a machine crunch but without the lower back strain common with ab machines. The exercise will vary according to the size of ball that you're using and the degree to which it's inflated.



Common Errors

1. Bouncing on the ball

This exercise is not about bouncing the elbows up and down on the ball. There should not be any rebound at all, just constant pressure. When you release the pressure and let the elbows up, don't let the ball bounce them up, just release the tension slowly and let the ball push the elbows up slowly.

Tricks

1. Use one elbow

To hit the sides a little more, push down on the ball with only one elbow.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Stiff-Arm Cable Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise works the abs by setting the resistance further away from your body, placing direct torque on the abs. The angle the arms are held at really forces the upper abs to fire strongly to stabilize and maintain that angle.

How To Do It

This exercise is performed very much like a regular cable crunch with one major difference - instead of holding the bar behind your head and staying close to the pulley, you want to take a step back and hold the resistance directly out in front of you.

Use the bar attachment for this exercise. Step back a few feet from the high pulley (or set it to about lower chest level if you have an adjustable pulley). Start with a slight arch in your lower back and tighten your abs to stabilize your spine. Keep your arms stiff and locked at about 90 degrees at the shoulder. Now do a crunch, bending forward and keeping your arms locked in that position for the entire movement.

The angle in the arms, and working to maintain that position throughout the movement, puts more tension and torque on the upper abs as you're doing the cable crunch movement.

Start with a lighter weight in this movement as it does have the potential to put torque on the lower back. Once you do a few reps, you'll get a better idea of how it's done and how much weight you'll be able to use.



Common Errors

1. Letting the arms or shoulders move or bend

If you let the arms or shoulders move or bend, it will turn the movement into more of a pullover movement for the lats. This takes the tension off the abs, which is not what our goal is for this exercise. Even if you have to lighten up the weight to maintain that position, it'll be more effective that way.

2. Not stepping back far enough

If you stand too close to the pulley, when you extend your arms forward and hold them there, you'll push too far forward, altering the mechanics of the movement. Ideally, the furthest you want to push forward is pretty much directly under the high pulley, not forward of it.

3. Rebounding at the top

When you come back to the top of the movement, be sure to take it very slow. Don't let momentum take over and rebound back down. This is the point at which it will be toughest on the lower back - the less momentum that comes into play, the better. Be sure to keep a tight arch in your lower back as you come back to the top to protect the lower back as much as possible.

Tricks

1. Finish with a pushdown to the floor

At the bottom of the stiff arm crunch, finish with a "[Pushdown to the Floor](#)" for an extra kick in the abs.

2. Inhale sharply and hold it

At the top of the movement, just before you start to crunch forward and down, take a big sharp breath and hold it for a second as you start the plunge down. The reason for this is that the core is most stable when the breath is held. In this exercise, the lower back encounters the most stress at the top of the movement. By holding your breath for that short period at the top, you can more solidly stabilize the core area and protect the lower back. As you start to pass the halfway point on the way down, exhale forcefully and collapse your core forward as you come around to the bottom. This will help you get more range of motion with the exercise.



3. Middle Pulley Kneeling Stiff Arm Cable Crunches

This is a variation of the exercise that is done using an adjustable-height pulley. Use a single cable handle for this exercise and a fairly heavy weight. Set the pulley about 2 1/2 to 3 feet up from the ground and kneel a few feet back from it. Put one hand in the handle then set the other hand on top of it. Now, with a slight bend in your elbows, keeping the arms stiff and locked, pull/push the handle down and back towards your knees, squeezing your abs hard.

- The single handle helps give the abs a better feel during the exercise. At the top of each rep, let the weight set down to "reset" the abs. This will also help take tension off the lower back.
- You can alternate which hand is placed on top every few reps or with each set. Be sure to keep your lower back tight and arched to maintain stability. This exercise will also work the lats and the triceps to some extent.
- Use the weight of your upper body to push down on the handle and lean into it, allowing you to use more weight.
- You can push down to the sides as well.

[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Low Pulley Preacher Crunches

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Using the preacher bench to act as a pivot point allows you to get a HUGE stretch on the upper abs followed by a tremendous contraction right where it counts. Your abs have never experienced this type of stretch and tension before!

How To Do It

Set a preacher bench in front of a low pulley with the seat towards the pulley. The angled face of the preacher bench should be facing away from the pulley. Set the height of the preacher pad as low as it will go (if you can set the pad height, that is). You will be resting your lower back on the angled face of the preacher bench so it should be a height that you can lean against comfortably with your feet on the floor.

A rope or bar attachment will work for this exercise (use whichever you prefer). Try this exercise with a light weight to get an idea of how it works before going heavy. Getting into position is easier if you have someone hand the rope/bar to you but it can be done solo. It just takes a bit more effort and coordination to get into position.

If you have a spotter helping, lie back with your lower back on the front face of the preacher pad (where your upper arms usually go when doing the regular preacher exercise). Your upper back/shoulder blades should be right across the top edge of the bench. Reach back behind your head and have the spotter hand you the rope attachment. Hold the rope attachment with your hands beside your head. It will look like the bottom position of a tricep extension.

If you don't have a spotter, you'll need to first grasp the rope attachment and lift up the weight a little. Step forward then quickly get yourself into position on the front face of the bench. The cable will be running along your side at this point. Lean back on the bench then swing the cable back overhead into position. There will be pictures of how to get into the start position and out of the exercise below.

Now you're ready to start...

Let the pull of the weight stretch you back over the bench edge to get a strong stretch on the upper abs. Relax into it for maximum stretch effect. Now crunch up, doing just a simple crunch until you've gone up as far as you can. Here's the trick... at that contracted position, do a tricep extension so that your arms are now straight up in the air.

From that position, curl your torso around and push forward, as though you're trying to push the cable forward. This puts an excellent contraction on the upper abs after they've just gotten a great stretch over the top of the bench.

Lower back to the top of the crunch position, bring the arms back down like you're lowering an overhead tricep extension, then allow the weight to stretch your abs over the top edge of the bench again.



Common Errors

1. Not pushing forward after the crunch

To fully complete this movement and maximize the effects, be sure to extend the arms straight then push forward. This will really give the abs a hard contraction.

2. Facing the bench the wrong way

Be sure that the angled face of the preacher pad is facing AWAY from the pulley! If you sit on the seat and the bench pad is facing away from the stack, you will be doing a completely different exercise.

3. Not getting a full stretch

Be sure to let your upper back stretch backwards and arch your back at the start of the movement. This is the range of motion that the abs don't normally get worked in. It'll ensure complete ab development. The position of the back on your bench will keep most of the tension off the lower back so let the weight really stretch the abs.

Tricks

1. Swiss Ball Low Pulley Crunches

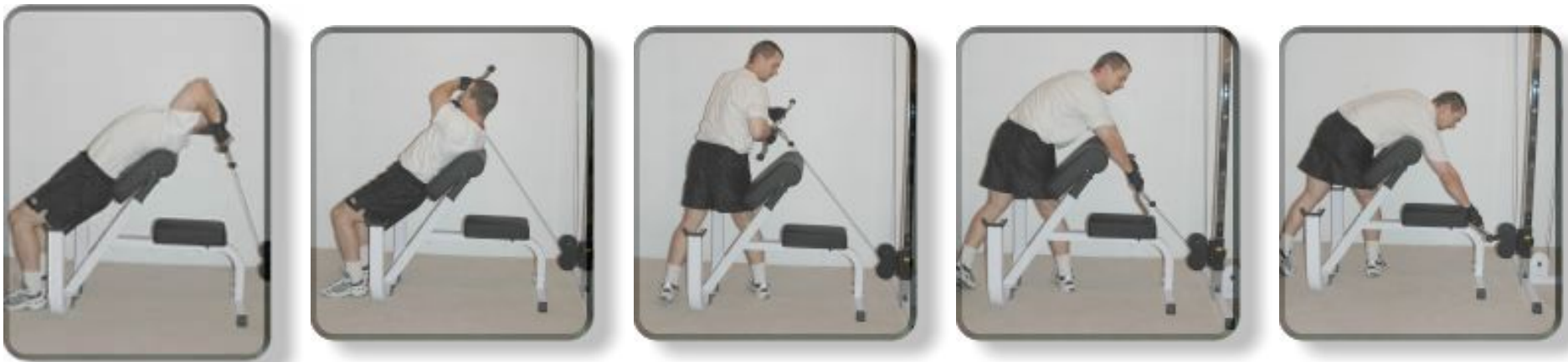
This exercise is basically the same in execution as the preacher bench version only you'll be laying back on a Swiss Ball instead of the preacher bench. You may find this easier to get into position on if you're training on your own. You can just roll back on the ball and reach back and grasp the rope attachment yourself.

Perform the exercise exactly as you would above: stretch backwards at the start, crunch up to the top of the regular crunch movement, then do the tricep extension then push forward on the cable.

2. Getting into position



3. Getting out of the exercise



[Ab Cannonballs](#) • [Bench Press Crunches](#) • [Between the Legs Low Pulley Crunches](#) • [Cross-Bench Crunches](#) • [Crunch Roll-Ups](#)
[Decline Cable Crunches](#) • [Declined Body Crunches](#) • [Foot Resisted Crunches](#) • [Incline Bench Dumbbell Crunches](#)
[Leg Curl Machine Crunches](#) • [Partner Resisted Crunches](#) • [Pushdowns To The Floor](#)
[Seated Swiss Ball Crunches](#) • [Stiff Arm Cable Crunches](#) • [Low Pulley Preacher Crunches](#)

Bonuses

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

The "Ab Ripper"

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

There are several reasons why this exercise is extremely effective, not to mention challenging.

- **It works all the major muscle groups in your upper body** in one movement. The bench press half of the exercise works the chest, anterior delts and triceps. The pulldown half works the back, biceps, and posterior delts. The combination of the two movements works the entire abdominal region. It is extremely demanding to perform.
- This exercise takes advantage of a concept that can best be described as **contralateral antagonistic muscle activation**. In layman's terms, this means that when you work a certain muscle, e.g. the chest, the antagonistic or opposing muscle on the other side of your body (i.e. the back) will be a little stronger. This increase in strength can be as much as 5% or more.
- It also places a **tremendous stabilizing requirement on the abs** during the movement due to the directly opposing forces placed on the body during the rep. One side of your body is pushing while one side is pulling. All the stress of these two opposing movements must be transferred through the core muscles of your abdominal region. In order to not let yourself get wrung out like a wet towel, you've got to squeeze your abs for all you're worth.

This movement is incredibly effective for martial artists, boxers and baseball players for developing explosive rotational power. In fact, it is effective for essentially any sport that has a rotational power component, which is most sports.

How To Do It

Essentially, this exercise is half flat dumbbell bench press and half one-arm pulldown. You will be pressing the dumbbell at the same time as you are doing a one-arm pulldown. The technique is fairly straightforward but the effects are amazing.



Start by setting a flat bench perpendicular to and directly underneath a high pulley. You will be lying on the bench with only your upper back on the bench, e.g. if you were to stretch your arms out to the sides, they would be resting mostly on the bench to either side of you.

This orientation of the bench is very important for stability. If you set the bench normally and lie on it lengthwise, you're going to have a much harder time stabilizing your lower body when doing the exercise. Also, keeping your lower body off the bench will allow you the necessary freedom of movement to shift your legs and adjust your bodyweight positioning to perform the exercise most effectively.

- Attach a single handle to the high pulley and get yourself one moderate weight dumbbell. Start with a dumbbell that is about half of what you would use for a regular set of 8 reps on the flat dumbbell bench press. Set the pulldown weight to about 20 to 30 pounds more than this. You can adjust your weights upward as you become more familiar with and stronger at the exercise. Your first set will be a learning experience!
- Start by sitting on the bench with the dumbbell on end on your thigh, grasped in your left hand. Reach up and grasp the handle with your right hand. Make sure your right shoulder is directly under the pulley for the best line of pull. Here's how to get into position to start...
- Drop your rear end forward off the bench. At the same time move your left arm back to rest on the bench (you can kick the dumbbell up and back by raising your left thigh if you're using a heavier dumbbell).
- When you've done this movement, your upper back and upper left arm should be resting on the bench and the dumbbell should be balanced as though you were in the bottom position of the dumbbell bench press. You should have the handle in your right hand with your arm fully extended and stretched directly up.

Now it's time to rip those abs!

- Tighten your abs up and do a rowing/pulldown movement with your right arm while simultaneously doing a bench press rep with your left arm. No secrets to this part! Just push hard and pull hard. Be absolutely sure to clench those abs as hard as you can at the start and all the way through to the negative (lowering) phase of the movement.
- You may find it necessary to shift your feet around in order to stay balanced in the movement. This is normal. Your body will find the proper placement for balance if you let it do its thing naturally. Occasionally, I've even found it necessary to kick one leg up in the air in order to stay balanced (this normally occurs at the start of the rep when you are about to push up/pull down).

- At the bottom of the movement, don't allow your upper arm to rest on the bench. We want to keep maximum tension on the abs throughout the exercise.

Be aware that it will take a few reps to become coordinated with this movement. It's not very common to be pulling and pushing forcefully at the same time, and it can feel awkward at first! You will feel tremendous tension across your entire abdominal region, unlike anything that you've ever experienced before. It will feel as though someone is trying to wring you like a wet towel.

Do a full set of 6 to 8 reps with your arms in this position then do one of two things...either immediately switch sides and do the pulldown with your left and press with your right, or take a rest and do the opposite sides as a separate set. Either way will work. Taking a brief rest between sets will allow your abdominal region a little time to recover from the stress of the movement.

To complete the set, set the dumbbell on end on your thigh, then use your legs to push yourself back up as you pull on the handle to help pull yourself back up to the sitting position on the bench.

Once you've got a handle on how to do the movement, you can start increasing the weights you're using to really push your core strength. As long as you keep the proper ratio of weight between the pulldown and the press (the pulldown weight a little more than the press weight), you can work up to some pretty big weights. As an example, I've gone as high as a 120 lb. dumbbell on the press and 150 lbs. on the pulldown.

My recommendation...don't increase the weight the first time you do this exercise. Stick with your starting weight and do it for 4 sets (2 sets on each side). This is a dimension of tension that your body will most likely NEVER have experienced before and I can promise that you WILL feel this the next day (and probably for several days after!), no matter how much abdominal training you've done in your life.

Inverse "Ab Rippers"

You've done the exercise lying down...now it's time to reverse the roles. This unique variation is exactly the same in concept -- push with one side and pull with the other. The only difference is the orientation of your body.

Instead of lying flat on a bench and pressing and pulling down, you're going to be doing a standing one-arm dumbbell row for your back and a one-arm cable-crossover/pressdown movement for your chest. This puts a whole new type of stress on the body - I would suggest working with the lying version first before attempting this one. This is a more advanced variation of the exercise.

I would suggest trying a standing one-arm dumbbell row just by itself so that you have an idea of the mechanics and body position of the exercise. It's CRITICAL that you maintain a tight lower back with an arch throughout this exercise. Rounding the back over puts a lot of stress on the lower back area and, combined with the stress on the core when doing the full exercise, it could lead to injury if you're not careful or comfortable with the movement.

- You will need a dumbbell that is about 20 pounds heavier than the weight you have on the pulley. Use a single handle attached to the high pulley for this exercise.
- Stand sideways to the high pulley, grasp the handle then get it into position as though you were about to do a downward press with it (similar to a starting position for a cable cross-over).
- Now bend down and pick up the dumbbell in the other hand. Use your knees and keep your back tight and arched.
- You will be doing the row in between your legs for best stability.
- Row the dumbbell up while at the same time, pushing/pressing the cable handle down towards the floor.
- You will feel a STRONG twisting sensation through your entire abdominal area. Keep your abs tight, lower the weights and repeat!



This exercise puts your abs in a more strongly contracted position than when lying flat, giving the exercise a very different feel. Also, since your core is now also responsible for stabilizing and supporting the body in a bent-over position, it's going to be very strongly challenged. Keep a strict eye on your form for both halves of the exercise.

Common Errors

1. Improper bench placement

Be sure that you place the bench perpendicular underneath the handle so that you keep your lower body free to move. If you place the bench lengthwise, you're going to have a hard time stabilizing yourself.

2. Using too much weight too soon

Start with a light to moderate weight until you get an idea of what your abdominals are capable of. This exercise places a tremendous shearing force on the midsection and your abs must be strong enough to hold tight and prevent the stress from going to the lower back.

3. Not squeezing the abs hard enough

It is essential that you squeeze the abs hard from the moment you start the rep. Pulling and pushing with force at the same time sends a lot of stress through your abdominal area. You must be ready for it or you won't even be able to start the weight moving! Be sure to keep your abs as tight as you can on the negative as well. If you lose tension on the negative, the weights are going to come crashing down.

Tricks

1. Explode

You can develop tremendous explosive power through your abdominal core muscles by starting each rep with a powerful thrust. Start by clenching your abs as hard as you can. Think about exploding up with one arm and down with the other then do it! The explosion should start with a sharp abdominal contraction and follow through to your limbs.

2. Squeeze your chest and back muscles hard at the top of the movement

Don't hit the top and take a rest. Squeeze everything hard. If you need to, you can take a rest at the bottom of the movement.

3. Pause between reps

You can make your explosion even more effective by releasing the tension in your upper body between reps. Rest your upper arm on the bench, let your pulldown arm hang and stretch, and let your abs unclench. This releases all the elastic tension in your muscles forcing your body to start from scratch between reps.

4. Don't pause between reps

Doing the reps in a continuous fashion places a tremendous amount of tension on the abs at the turnaround point at the bottom of the rep. Changing the direction of the pull/push must be done starting from the abs. Clench them hard!

5. Swiss Ball Push-Pulls

Instead of using a bench, this exercise can also be done on a Swiss Ball (the large inflatable exercise ball).

The mechanics of this version are essentially the same, the major difference being decreased stability. Stick to moderate weights when doing this variation as you will have a very hard time stabilizing yourself and doing the exercise effectively with heavier weights.

The Swiss Ball does allow increased range of motion for both the press and the pulldown because your arm won't be contacting the bench at the bottom.

At the start of the movement, when you are getting the dumbbell into position, you are going to have to rest it on your chest while you reach up to grasp the pulldown handle.



6. Cable Cross-Over Standing Push Pulls

This exercise can also be done using the regular cable cross-over machine. It's best done with an adjustable-height pulley but, if you don't have that, it can also be done kneeling down using the low pulley. The resistance won't be quite as direct but still very effective.

First, stand facing away from one pulley and towards the other. Reach behind and grasp one single cable handle behind you then use the other hand to help get it into position in front of you as though doing a one-arm chest press movement. Now reach forward and grasp the other handle in front of you. Leave your arm extended.

Now, at the same time, push with the one arm and pull back with the other. The effect is very similar to the free weight version, though it may not be as strong of a cross-tension on the abs.

With this version, focus on the rotation in the core rather than the push or pull itself. This is where the real work gets done by the abs.



[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Reverse Leg Raises

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise works the abs in an extremely unique fashion. It can be done using only bodyweight and actually uses the abs to draw the lower body up and in (bringing the pelvis towards the rib cage), rather than crunching the rib cage down towards the pelvis, as with most ab exercises. This is excellent for tightening the waist.

How To Do It

This exercise can be done using several different pieces of equipment. The best place to do this is using the dipping station, whether it be the full V-bar setup or the two dip handles coming off the back of the Universal machine. You can also create your own dip station in the power rack by setting the safety rails at about mid-chest level and setting two Olympic bars on the safety rails. When you stand in between the two bars, it will be just like using a dip station.

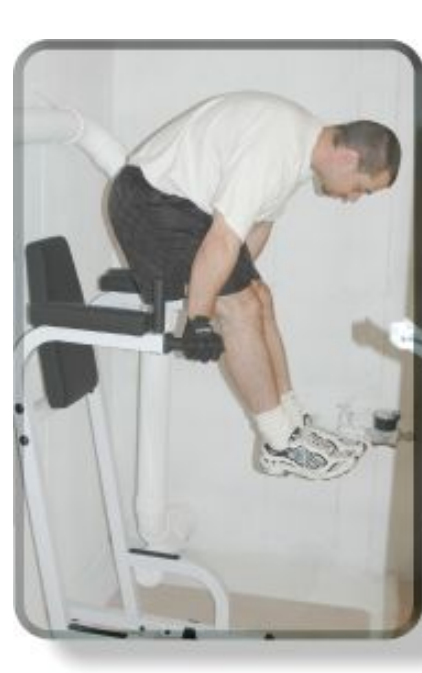
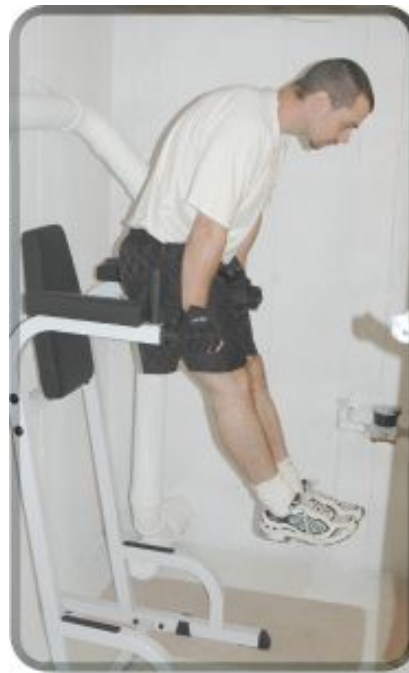
Set your hands on the dipping bars/handles and get into the top position of the dip (arms locked out) with your torso hunched over as though you're trying to form a half-moon shape with your body. If your feet hit anything, turn around and face the other way.

Keep your arms locked out and in the same position throughout the movement. The motion will not come from your arms.

Start the movement by very deliberately drawing your abs up and in (as though sucking up your gut). Bring your hips upwards towards the ceiling. This will cause your lower body to lift up and your upper body to hunch forward more. Draw your lower body up as high as you possibly can with this technique then hold it there and squeeze the abs hard for a few seconds.

If you've watched gymnastics, the movement is very similar to the first part of the movement when a person goes from a locked-out dip position on the parallel bars up into a handstand. Rather than going all the way up into a handstand, however, you leave your legs in front of you and focus on squeezing and sucking up the abs.

Lower down slowly then repeat.

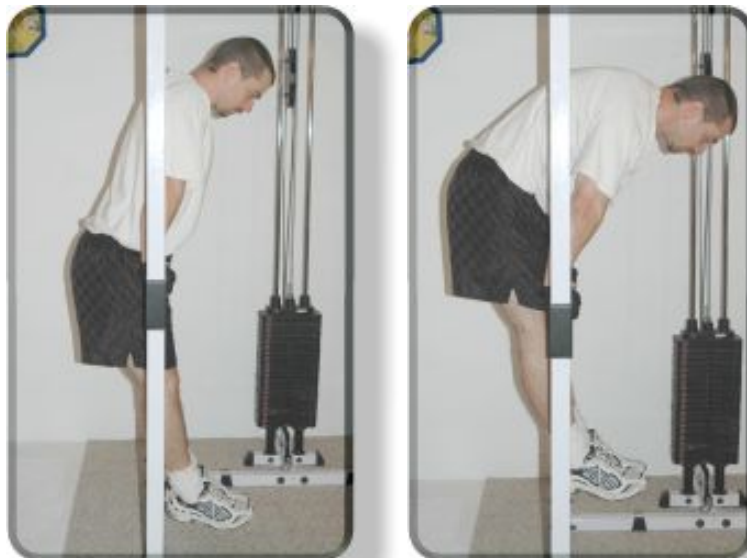


Alternative Setups

For an alternative setup for this exercise, you can also use a solid, power rack safety rail or other solid surface that has space underneath for your legs to swing under (even two solid objects that you can set your hands on and hold your body up in between).

If you have a VERY solid table or counter with space underneath for your legs, you may be able to do this exercise on either of those. If you do use a table, be sure it's not going to be prone to tipping over if you place a lot of resistance on the edge (having another person leaning on the other side can help with that).

Set your hands on the railing with your fingers forward and your thumbs gripping around. They should be set about shoulder width apart or so (exact placement is not critical). Your legs will be under the rail and your upper body should be hunched forward over the rail, as though you are trying to form a half-moon shape with your body. The execution of the movement is exactly the same, only your legs won't be completely free to move around and you will have to slide your thighs against the rail as you bring your lower body up.



Common Errors

1. Letting the arms bend and doing a dip

This exercise does not happen at the arms but only at the midsection. If the arms bend, you'll be taking focus off the abs.

2. Swinging the legs

This is a very controlled movement, not a momentum-based movement. Don't let your legs swing to try and get momentum to get them up. This movement starts by drawing the abs up and in.

3. Not hunching forward enough

If you don't hunch your upper body over the railing, you won't have proper balance. Don't let your upper body go straight up and down, imagine it's a half-moon shape and you'll have the position right.

Tricks

1. Adding resistance

To add resistance to this exercise, hold a dumbbell between your feet. This will increase the weight of the lower body. Start with a light dumbbell at first, to get an idea of how much to use. Even a little will very quickly feel like a lot. For a burnout set, do as many reps as you can with the weight, then drop the dumbbell and continue with only bodyweight.

2. Suck it up

Imagine the movement like you're sucking your gut up and in, not that you're raising your legs. This will give you the proper focus for the exercise.

3. Knee-ups

Instead of keeping your legs straight, which maximizes the resistance on the abs, to make the exercise a little easier, you can bend your knees and do this as a knee-up. This reduces the resistance on your abs and will allow you to do more reps.



4. Knee-twists

To hit the sides, bend your knees and twist to the side as you suck the abs up. Repeat on the other side.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Lean Back Cable Supports

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is an extraordinary exercise for building supporting strength and stability in the muscles of the core, especially for movement such as squats and deadlifts.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need a low pulley, a Swiss ball and a rope attachment.

Start by setting a moderate weight onto the stack and attach the rope to the low pulley. Set the ball in front of the stack about 2 feet away. Sit on the ball, lean over and pick up the rope attachment. You will hold the rope with a neutral grip (palms facing each other) with the ends of the rope pointing directly up.

Pull the rope up until your arms are bent 90 degrees. Be sure your arms are not touching your thighs - we don't want any of the support tension to be taken off the abs. Keep your arms locked solidly in this position for the entire exercise. In the start position, you should feel strong support tension going through your abdominal region.

From the sitting position, keeping your arms in position, smoothly and slowly lean backwards on the ball. As you lean back, you will notice the direction of supporting tension being placed on the abs changing according to your body orientation. The more you lean back, the lower on the abs this tension will hit.

Hold the top position for a few seconds, then slowly sit back up to the start position. Don't let your arms contact your thighs at the bottom of the exercise as this will take tension off the abs.

Hold it there for a few seconds, then lean back again.



Common Errors

1. Letting the arms bend

It's VERY important to keep the arms locked in the 90 degree-bent position. If you let them bend while you lean back, you remove the supporting tension from the abs and lose the benefits of the exercise.

2. Moving too fast

This is a slow, deliberate movement. We want to hit the abs with supporting tension over the entire surface. Moving too fast will move the tension too fast and possibly take it off the abs and place it more in the shoulders.

3. Rolling on the ball

Even though you're sitting on the ball, there is no rolling involved. You start in a sitting position then bend only at the hips. This exercise can also be done on a bench if you don't have a ball, but the ball is more comfortable for this exercise.



1. Hold with one arm

You can use a rope attachment for this version as well. Basically, do the same exercise but hold on with only one hand. This will place uneven tension on the abs, forcing the side abs and stabilizing core muscles to fire while you're doing it. If you have a rope that slides freely in its collar, pull it up as high as it goes, then grip lower on the rope, closer to the middle of the rope itself. This way, you'll end up holding it in about a similar place. Be sure to keep your arm locked at 90 degrees with this variation as well.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)



High Pulley Lying Cable Crunches

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This version of the cable crunch changes the direction and orientation of the resistance to directly target the extreme lower abdominal area.

This exercise utilizes the high pulley in a very unique way. Rather than using a low pulley and coming up, you'll actually be using a high pulley and pushing/pulling down with the lower abs. The position and orientation of the resistance targets the extreme lower ab area, making this an ideal exercise for tightening up the lower abs and getting rid of the common bulge in that area.

How To Do It

If you have an adjustable height pulley, set it to about 2 feet or so off the ground. If you don't, you'll need to grab the bar from the high pulley before you get into position for the exercise and sit down with it.

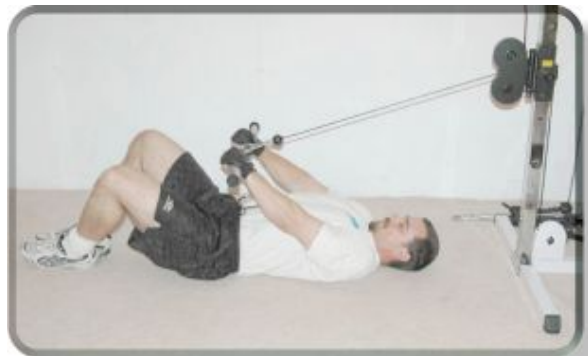
Use a bar attachment for this exercise (either a straight or cambered bar is fine). Lie flat on your back in front of the high pulley (like you're doing a regular crunch), feet pointing away from the pulley, with your knees bent 90 degrees. When you do the exercise, your knees should be splayed out wide to the sides to allow clearance for the bar and to reduce hip flexor contribution to the movement.

The position where you hold the bar is important for this exercise. Rather than holding the bar above your head, you'll want to push the bar forward and down somewhat as though you just finished the bottom of a pushdown-type exercise. This is very important as the angle of the cable and the direction the resistance is coming from is what makes this exercise so effective.

Now you're ready to crunch.

Rather than trying to pull the bar down as you would with a regular cable crunch, you'll instead want to feel as though you're pushing the bar down towards your feet. This hits the lower abs very well. The pushing tension, not pulling, hits the abs very differently, making the exercise extremely effective at targeting the extreme lower ab area.

Do this exercise slowly and deliberately, feeling for that tension in the lower ab area.



Common Errors

1. When pelvis meets bar

Imagine your pelvis coming up to meet the bar. Don't actually lift it - just imagine it. This mental imagery will help the right muscles to activate during the movement.

2. Using too much weight

Use a moderate weight when you're doing this exercise - too much and you won't be able to feel it in the right place as you'll be trying too hard to move the weight rather than actually feeling the exercise working the abs. Play around with weight on this one to get a feel for how much you'll need to use.

3. Using momentum

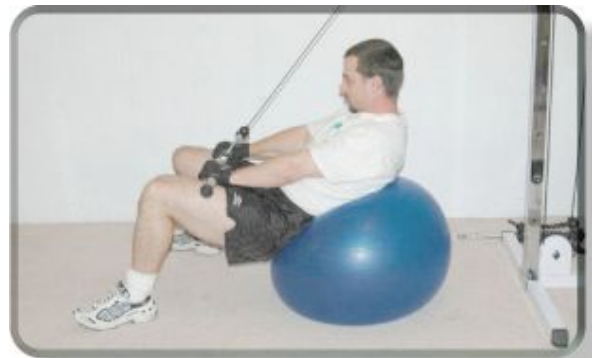
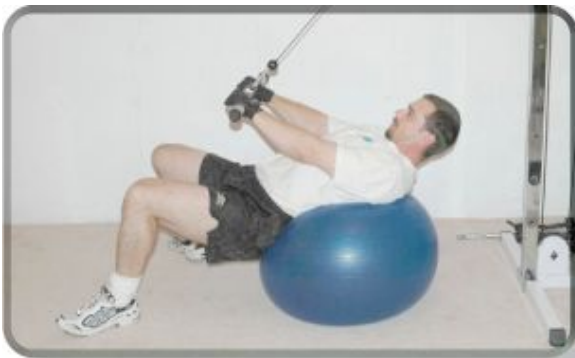
A slow, deliberate pace is critical in this exercise in order to really feel it in the lower abs. If you allow too much momentum into the movement, the upper abs will take over and you won't get enough resistance in the most important contracted position of the exercise.

Tricks

1. On the ball

This exercise can be done on the Swiss Ball too. This is especially useful when you're using a pulley that isn't adjustable but only available as a high pulley.

The execution is fundamentally the same, just more unstable and a somewhat different angle.



2. Pull over

To work the upper abs along with the lower abs, you can make this a two-part movement. This works best on an adjustable-height pulley that is set lower - the really high pulley may be too high for this to be effective. At the start of each rep, allow the bar to come back and up somewhat.

Do a pullover movement at the start to get the bar into position for the pushing part of the movement to hit the lower abs. The pullover phase will work the upper abs.

[One Arm Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Forearm Supported Leg Raises](#) • [High Pulley Hook Crunches](#) • [High Pulley Lying Crunches](#)
[Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins](#) • [Seated Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Roll-Ups](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins

Advanced

This exercise has a demonstration video included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise works the lower abs in a very unstable environment. The nature of the exercise also forces your entire abdominal area to contract in order to keep the body supported while doing it, further increasing the tension on the abs.

This exercise requires the use of a hip belt and something to attach it to, e.g. a high pulley or some other solid object. It's a very unique exercise that forces the entire abdominal area to work in a dynamic and unstable environment.

How To Do It

Start by hanging a hip belt from a high pulley. Set a heavy weight on the pulley and use a chain to extend the belt down so that it's about waist level. If you don't have a chain to extend the hip belt down, you can also extend without a chain by doing the following: pull the pin out, lift the cable up a little, then put the pin back in. Now you've got some extra length to the cable. Setting the belt lower like this will allow you to pull up and in for more resistance during the movement. This belt forms a sling into which you're going to be resting your legs.

Set a bench or solid object a few feet in front of you (it'll take a little experimentation to find your correct distance in between the sling and the bench). This is what you're going to be supporting yourself on. Face the bench with your back to the sling. Set your hands on the bench edge. Now set one leg back into the sling so your shin is supported in the sling. Get your balance then step back and maneuver your other leg into the sling.



Get your other leg into the sling. Both your shins should now be resting in the sling with your hands on the bench. Keep your abs very tight so that you're stiff like a board. Now pull your legs in towards the bench. Your legs will be swinging around freely as you do this.

Squeeze hard as you pull in. This exercise requires your abs to stabilize and support your body to keep it from collapsing, all the

while that you're pulling your legs in. It's a very intense contraction and really contributes strongly to tightening up the entire midsection.



Start



Finish

Common Errors

1. Not keeping the abs tight

If you allow any tension to go out of the abs, your body will start to sag and/or collapse in the middle, putting greater stress on the lower back. When the abs are tight, lower back stress is minimized.

2. No momentum

This exercise is not about swinging in the sling. It's about using the path and instability of the leg sling setup to increase the tension on the muscles as you contract them and bring them towards the chest. Allowing too much momentum to come into play will decrease the tension and increase stress on the lower back.

3. Too far apart or too close together

If the bench and sling are too far apart or too close together, the effect of the exercise may be reduced. You can certainly play with the distance but don't overdo it. There is a best range for this exercise. When you've experimented a little with the movement, you'll be able to tell where the optimal distance is for you.

Tricks

1. Shift around

Try shifting your line of pull around by shifting your legs around, sides, etc. You can bring your knees up towards either side. You can alter your body position. You can alter how close or how far the bench and sling are apart.

2. The lower the sling, the greater the resistance

By starting with the sling lower, you force your abs to work more directly against gravity to perform the exercise. This makes it more challenging. Conversely, if you set the sling a little higher, it makes it easier. Too high, however, and it make the exercise ineffective. My recommendation would be to keep it about even with the bench or move it lower from there.

3. Go up on your toes

If you want to ramp up the resistance on the abs, try setting your toes in the sling instead of your shins. This automatically increases the tension that the abs must contract with.

4. Pull in then move side to side

For an extra hit to your side abs, pull your knees as far in as you can then swing to the left and to the right. This adds a unique type of contraction to the exercise and really works the side abdominal area.



5. One Legged Sling Ab Pull-Ins

For an extra challenge on the abs, you can also do this exercise with only one leg in the sling. This will send more of the tension through the sides in addition to the lower abs. You can do it with your shin in the sling or, if you've got strong abs, you can also do it up on your toes in the sling. Your other leg can either be held free out in space or you can cross it over top of the other leg behind you. Experiment to see which method you prefer. The execution of the exercise is exactly the same.



One Leg Free To The Side



One Leg Crossed Over The Back Of The Other

[One Arm Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Forearm Supported Leg Raises](#) • [High Pulley Hook Crunches](#) • [High Pulley Lying Crunches](#)
[Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins](#) • [Seated Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Roll-Ups](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Seated Hanging Leg Raises

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The hanging leg raise is an excellent abdominal exercise. This variation is not only easier on your lower back but helps to remove the hip flexors from the movement, all the while increasing the contraction on the abs.

This exercise targets the abdominal muscles with an extremely intense contraction. The range of motion of the exercise is short but the tension on the abs is excellent.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need a bench or chair (a bench will work better) and a bar with adjustable height. This can be a regular Olympic bar on a power rack, a Smith Machine bar, or any other setup you can think of.

Put a bench inside the rack. Set a bar on the racks at about forehead level when you're sitting on the bench. Sit on the bench and grasp it with an underhand grip. Your legs should be slightly bent with your butt and feet on the bench.

Pull your butt off the bench and raise your knees up into your chest. Hold your breath while doing this short movement to help stabilize the abs and improve the contraction.

The movement itself looks like the top bit of a hanging leg raise. Squeeze hard at the top then lower your legs and set yourself back down on the bench. Release all tension on the abs as you exhale then do another rep.

This exercise results in a very hard contraction in the abs for several reasons:

- First, the position of the legs at the start of the rep is already near the maximum contracted position of the abs.
- Second, your abs start the movement in a mechanical disadvantage because they are already shortened. This means they must work harder in order to achieve the contraction.
- Third, releasing all the tension on the abs between reps means you dissipate all the elastic tension that the muscle normally builds up in a regular movement. Elastic tension in the muscle is very similar to the tension you get when you stretch an elastic band. When you release the stretch, it releases the energy.



Put these three points together and you can see that the abs have to start from scratch at a mechanical disadvantage near their peak contracted position. The results: major burn!

Another advantage this exercise has over regular hanging leg raises is that it primarily targets the abs. Normally, when you do hanging leg raises, the first part of the movement involves a lot of hip flexor action. This variation starts the movement with the hip flexors already almost fully contracted. The tension in this position goes primarily to the abs.

Even better, this version greatly reduces stress on the lower back by eliminating the first part of the movement. Generally, pain in that area occurs due to the torque on the lower back as you raise your legs from hanging directly down to bringing them up about halfway. Skip that range of motion and you skip the pain.

Common Errors

1. Using too much momentum

It's critical to start this exercise with a sharp abdominal contraction. This is what is really going to fire up the abdominal muscles and increase the tension on the abs.

2. Dropping down onto the bench

While you do want to sit on the bench and release the tension in between sets, you don't want to drop yourself down from the top all the way to the bench. Much of the benefit of any abdominal exercise comes from the negative or lowering portion of the rep. Be sure you take full advantage!

Tricks

1. Hold the top contraction

Hold the contraction at the top of the movement for several seconds. Since this exercise actually focuses primarily on the top part of the movement, holding the contraction at the top can really intensify the work on the abs. Squeeze it as hard as you can for at least a count of several seconds.

2. Try it without releasing the tension sitting on the bench

Normally, with this exercise, you would sit yourself on the bench in between reps to release the tension and force the abs to start from scratch with each rep. You can also keep the tension on the abs by not sitting down and releasing. Just allow your legs and butt to brush the bench then bring the legs back up.

3. To increase the resistance, hold a dumbbell between your feet

If you'd like to make this exercise harder, set a dumbbell in between your feet when doing the reps. You don't need much in order to make a big difference in the resistance due to the position of the legs. Watch the angle of your feet so that the dumbbell doesn't slide out. A good alternative is to use ankle weights, if you have them.

4. Hit the sides

You can bring the legs/knees up to the sides to hit the sides of the abs during this movement.

5. Combine it with Seated V-Ups

For an extra kick in the abs, you can also do a Seated V-Up on the bench either before, after or in between reps of this exercise. The Seated V-Up exercise is the one where only your butt is on the bench and your upper body and lower body are both held up to form a "V" position. With a short movement, try to bring your upper body and legs closer together by lifting both at the same time. The exercise can be tough on the back if you have back problems, though, so be cautious if you do try it.



[High Pulley Lying Crunches](#)

[Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins](#) • [Seated Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Roll-Ups](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

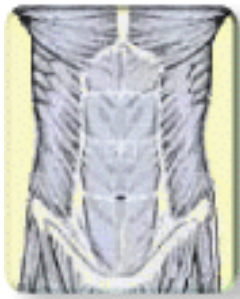
[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Swiss Ball Leg Raises

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise utilizes the instability and shape of the Swiss Ball to maximize the tension on the lower abs. It will affect mainly the lower abdominals but will hit the hip flexors to some degree.

How To Do It

- Set the ball about a foot in front of something solid (e.g. a Smith machine bar or dumbbell rack) that you can grab onto.
- Grasp above your head as you lie with your back on the ball. Your arms should be outside shoulder-width apart (the further apart you grasp, the more control over your body movement you will have).
- Keep your arms bent and ready to stabilize. This is



best done with your knees bent to keep stress off the lower back.

- Take a deep breath let your legs down, wrapping your back around the ball, expanding the rib cage and getting a big stretch on the abs.
- Raise your legs up by rolling up the spine.
- Your pelvis should tilt up and off the ball until only your lower back is on the ball and your legs are up in the air.
- Squeeze hard, lower and repeat.
- You will experience a lot of side-to-side movement when doing this exercise due to the inherent instability of the ball. Keep a good grip on something solid!



Common Errors

1. Improper body placement

Your body should be angled slightly down with your glutes on the forward-facing surface of the ball. Placing yourself too high up will decrease the amount of resistance on your abs. Placing yourself too low on the ball will allow your feet to hit the floor before you can get an effective stretch on the abs at the bottom.

2. Using momentum

Do not allow yourself to use momentum or do the exercise quickly. This can throw off your balance, increasing the risk of straining your back and decreasing the effectiveness of the exercise.

Tricks

1. Altering resistance

You can alter the resistance by rolling forward or backward on the ball.

- The more vertical your lower back is at the start of the movement (more on the front face of the ball), the harder it is, while the more horizontal your lower back (more on the top of the ball), the easier it is.
- You can also try ankle weights or bending your knees more or less.

2. Isometric hold

To work your abs in an isometric hold, at the top of the leg raise, hold your legs straight up and vertical for several seconds.

- Your hips should be off the ball with only your lower back resting on it. Hold on tight.
- You can also roll the ball over to the left, keeping your feet pointed up (your legs will be angled over to the right to keep balance). Roll over to the other side. This works the sides well.
- Keeping your knees bent will make this easier. You may also try doing leg thrusts from this position as well. A thrust is where you push your legs up (you will look as though you are trying to put footprints on the ceiling).

3. Roll side to side

To hit the side abs, while you're holding the raises at the top, you can roll your hips from side to side on the ball. This will put a torque on the side abs and help develop that area.

4. Increasing instability

The best way to increase the instability of this exercise and improve its functional results is to place your hands closer together on what you are gripping. Your hands are your main stability point for this exercise and placing them closer together will decrease your base of support. To really max out the instability, cross your hands over on the bar so that your left hand is on the right side and your right hand is on the left.



5. Use a smaller ball

Go to a discount store and pick up a small rubber ball about 18 inches in diameter. Make sure it is strong enough to support your bodyweight. The smaller ball increases the instability of the exercise, increasing its effect.

[One Arm Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Forearm Supported Leg Raises](#) • [High Pulley Hook Crunches](#) • [High Pulley Lying Crunches](#)
[Leg Sling Ab Pull-Ins](#) • [Seated Hanging Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Leg Raises](#) • [Swiss Ball Roll-Ups](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[**Bonuses**](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Double Cable Pull Crunches a.k.a. Nilsson Crunches

Intermediate

This exercise has a demonstration video
included in the separate video file.



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise is a special one - it allows you to use as much weight as your entire core musculature can physically handle in a crunching-type movement. The setup anchors your lower body and your upper body so that you're coming at it from both ends.

Have you ever used so much weight on the cable crunch that your upper body wasn't heavy enough to get the weight down? This exercise not only eliminates that problem, it adds resistance through the lower body as well, more than doubling the potential resistance that you can use with the exercise.

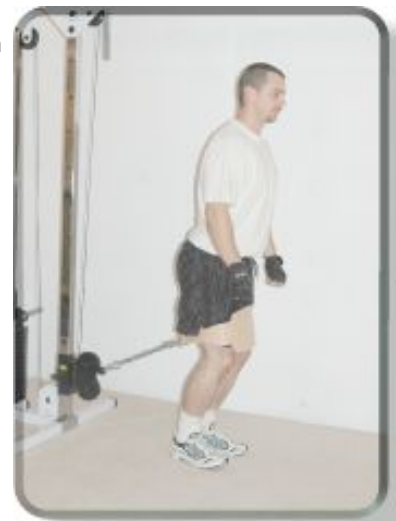
I couldn't resist giving this one the name "Nilsson Crunches", not because of ego but because this kind of crunch epitomizes my approach to exercises: take a good movement, make it better, then take it to the maximum level that you possibly physically can!

How To Do It

This exercise is done using both cable crossover towers. Set up a rope attachment on the high pulley on the one side and attach a dip belt to the low pulley on the other side. You'll be using very heavy weight for this when you actually do it but start out at a more moderate weight to get an idea of how the exercise works. Once you figure it out, kick that weight up as much as you can!

Go to the low pulley and step inside the dip belt. Slide the dip belt up so that it goes around your thighs just above your knees. Now lean forward and step forward (using baby steps) towards the high pulley. Grab the rope attachment and step back a little so that the weight stack on the high pulley is not resting on the bottom anymore. It's showtime!

Pull the rope down and in and, at the same time, sit your butt down and push your thighs forward. You will naturally come up on your toes as you push your thighs forward.



Position of Belt on Thighs

You'll get the resistance from the cable crunch movement on the high pulley AND resistance from the low pulley as your thighs come forward. This results in double stress on the abs and an extremely powerful contraction of everything your core area can muster. You can use VERY heavy weight with this one so, once you get an idea of how it works, feel free to pile it on. The more you use, the more strength you will build in your core.

When you're done, lean forward and release the rope (don't let it crash back down on the stack - control it until it's down). Keep your body leaning far forward to counterbalance the fact that the only resistance is now on the lower body. Now inch backwards with little steps until the low pulley stack rests on the bottom. Slide the dip belt down and you're done!



Common Errors

1. Not using enough weight

This is not a delicate, contraction-and-squeeze oriented abdominal exercise. This is a power exercise. You will get a contraction in the abs no matter what with this one - no need to focus on that. Just focus on powering the crunch movement from both directions and the tension on the abs will follow.

2. The dip belt is too high on your thighs

If you set the dip belt on your upper thighs, you're not going to get much range of motion from the lower body when you perform the crunch (it's a small range of motion as it is). Be sure that the dip belt is set just a little above the knees so that you get good resistance when you sit down and the knees move forward.

Tricks

1. Picture yourself as a bear trap closing

This exercise is all about power. When you do the exercise, imagine your upper and lower bodies as the upper and lower halves of a bear trap or a shark biting its prey. When you do the crunch, picture that bear trap or the jaws snapping shut with tremendous power.

2. Hold the contraction for as long as you can

This is self-explanatory but very hard to do when using heavy weight. Power down to the bottom of the crunch then try and hold that position for as long as you can. This will give your abs extra work on top of what you're already hitting them with.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Lying Leg Resistance Raises and Crunches

Lower Abs

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Looking for added resistance on the abs but have no equipment to do it with? This simple use of leg positioning adds tremendous tension to the standard leg raise movement.

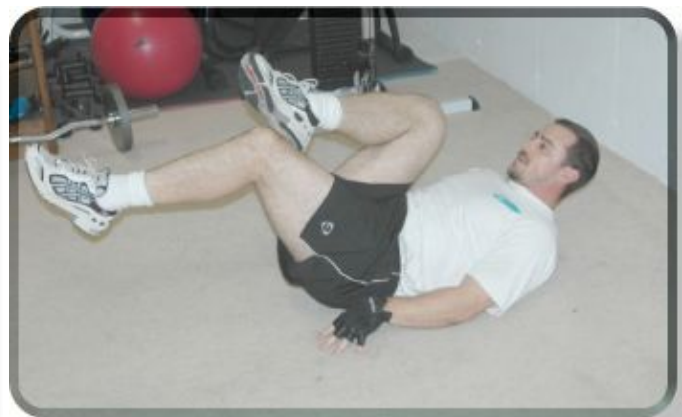
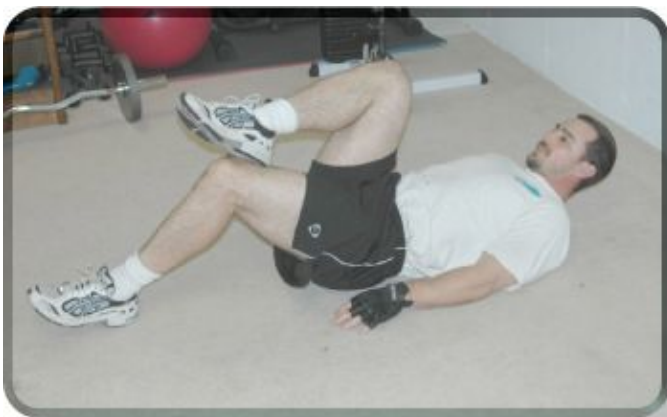
How To Do It

Lay on your back on the floor with your legs flat on the floor. Set your left foot on top of your lower right thigh like you're stepping on your own right leg. Set your arms and hands on the floor by your hips. Now raise your right leg (you can bend it as you come up or leave it straight) and roll up and back.

Use your "stepping-on" leg to push down against the right leg as you roll back and raise it up. Basically, imagine as though you are trying to use your left leg to push your right leg down as you're trying to fight your way up with your right leg.

Push **HARD** against the ground with your hands as you raise your right leg and push down with your left leg. You'll most likely find as you push with your hands on the ground that you naturally come up and push primarily with the fingertips. The resistance of your bent leg pushing on the straight leg gives great tension on the abs with no equipment requirement at all.

Do a set then repeat on the other side.





Common Errors

1. Not resisting enough

To really make this exercise effective, you can't just set the other leg on top and go through the motions. You must actively push down with your "stepping-on" leg as you raise the other one up. This is what makes the exercise so effective.

Tricks

1. Doing it as a crunch

This exercise can also be done as a crunch. Use the pushing of your legs to resist the crunching movement as you come up into the top of the crunch position.

2. Squeeze the abs harder and harder as you get to the top

Imagine as though your abs are springs that get harder to compress as you clench them in more and more.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Barbell Baton Twirling

Total Ab Exercises

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise works by placing rotational stress on the abs. As you turn the barbell, your abs are forced to stabilize while providing the force for the barbell rotation. It's useful for developing core stability and upper body strength.

How To Do It

This exercise is best done using an Olympic bar - the length and weight of the bar is what makes this exercise work most strongly. If you're unable to use an Olympic bar for this exercise, you can also use a shorter straight bar and add weight as you're able to until you get to the point where you can use the Olympic bar.

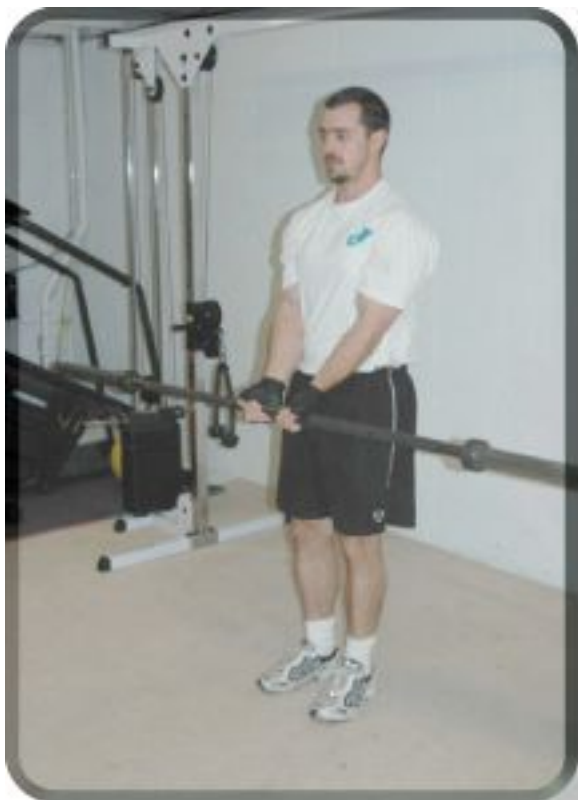
Basically, you're going to be twirling the bar very similar to somebody twirling a baton! The major difference here is that you'll be using two hands instead of just one (and you're not going to be tossing it up in the air, either).

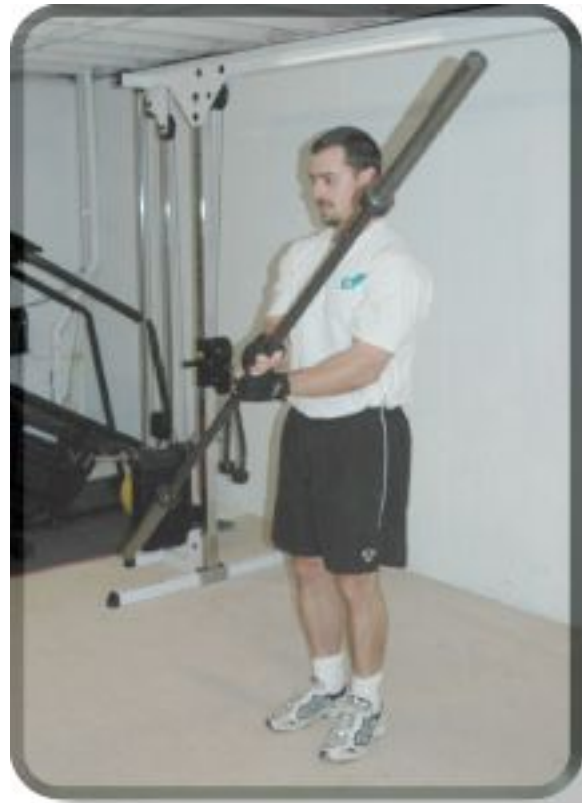
Start by standing the bar on end on the ground in front of you. Now grasp the bar with both hands in smooth center section - start with an overhead grip in both hands. Lift the bar up and hold it

horizontal a little in front of you - your arms will be bent in order to keep the bar off the ground.

Now start rotating the bar to the right, changing your grip on the bar as you rotate - this change will come naturally according to the needs of how the bar is moving. Grip the bar strongly to keep in your hands and off the ground! This not only works the abs but grip strength as well.

Be sure to keep the bar off the ground the whole time, keeping your entire body very tight. After several rotations in one direction, stop the bar and rotate it in the other direction. Keep going for as long as you can keep the bar up.





Common Errors

1. Letting the bar touch the ground

As mentioned above, keep the bar held off the ground for the entire duration of the exercise. If you let it touch the ground, you'll lose tension on the abs.

2. Taking too wide a grip

If your grip on the bar is too wide, the balance will be awkward and you may find the bar shifting up and down too much. Try to keep your hands fairly close in towards the center of the bar for best results.

3. Not keeping everything tight

Be sure to keep your lower back, abs, and entire upper body tight in order to best support the bar off the ground.



1. Add extra weight

With this exercise, use extra weight on it ONLY if you have very tight collars! You don't want the weight plates sliding off as you rotate the bar. Start with only 5 pounds on either side and work your way up slowly. This increase in weight on the ends of the bar makes the exercise tougher than simply have more weight on it.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Barbell Lever Pulls

Rotational/Obliques

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise uses the bar as a lever, allowing you to work against that lever instead of the direct resistance itself. This is a very unique form of resistance that is quite functional.

How To Do It

For this exercise you will need an Olympic bar and an ankle harness on a high pulley. Stand the bar on end in front of the pulley. Now slide the ankle harness over the end of then, THEN hook it up to the pulley (this is the easiest way to set up without banging the bar around too much).

Now brace the end of the bar on the bottom of the cable machine. The harness will hold the bar up. It's normally better to have the harness is just above the collar of the bar (where the plates butt up to) to keep it from sliding down as you do the movement but not completely necessary. If the ankle harness is below the collar, it may start to slide down and pinch your hands as you get close to the bottom of the movement.

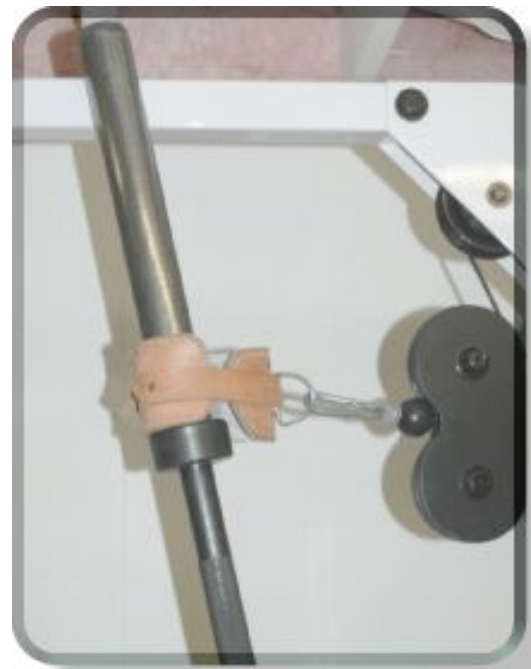
Stand sideways beside the bar and place your hands on the bar just below the weight collar/ankel harness.

Now pull it down like you're pulling down on a lever (use an over-

under grip - the under-grip hand should be at the top, the over-grip hand below it). Pull it until it's halfway down, then shift your weight so that you actually push it down close to the floor from that halfway point. Let up slowly and repeat.

On your next set, switch sides to keep things even.

This exercise is very unique in that the bar gives you something more solid to work the resistance against.





Common Errors

1. Using too much momentum

This movement should be done under complete control, using your abs and the leverage of your bodyweight to get the bar down. If you put in too much power and momentum at the top, you will lose tension towards the bottom.

2. Trying to pull all the way down

Be sure to switch from a pull to a push at the halfway point. If you try to pull it all the way down, you'll find it quite awkward.

3. Using poor pulling form

Keep your abs tight and your lower back slightly arched. Don't let it hunch over as you pull down. Keep everything tight as you switch to the push movement.

Tricks

1. Imagination is the key

To properly do this exercise, the key is to imagine that you're pulling down on a lever. This will give you the correct form to do the exercise.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Bench Press Leg Raise Crunches

Lower Abs

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is a variation of the Bench Press Crunch that uses the counterbalance of the barbell to allow you to strongly work the lower abs.

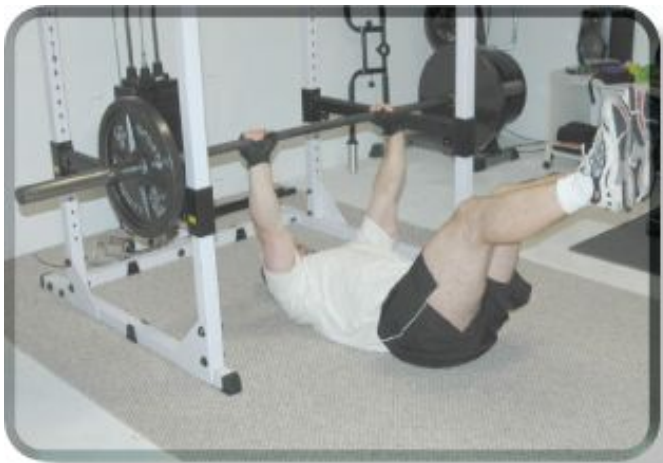
How To Do It

This exercise is performed almost exactly like the [Bench Press Crunch](#). It can be done on the floor or on a bench, using a barbell or even dumbbells.

Hold weight at the top of the bench press with your arms locked out. Your legs will start out straight (or knees slightly bent) and horizontal, just off the ground. In traditional lower ab leg raises, this places tremendous pressure on the lower back. Not here! The weight of the barbell counterbalances the legs and takes the stress off the lower back.

Do regular leg raises from there, keeping the leg stiff and bringing them all the way up as high as you can. Squeeze hard at the top then lower down slowly, bringing the legs down to a point about 6 inches from the floor. Keeping the legs off the floor keeps the tension on the abs strongly.

This exercise hits the extreme lower abs like you just can't do with regular leg raises because of the counterbalancing force of the barbell held above you. The best part is, it can be done with barbells or dumbbells so all you need are some free weights and you're ready to go.



Common Errors

1. Letting the feet touch

Normally, not letting the feet touch the ground in between reps is what sends all the torque onto the lower back. With the counterbalance of the weight, you don't have that problem and can really attack the lower abs. Keep them 6 inches off the ground as you come down.

2. Not using enough weight

Be sure you have enough weight on the bar/dumbbells that you effectively counterbalance your legs. If the weight isn't enough, you won't get the full benefits of the exercise.

Tricks

1. Dumbbell Bench Press Leg Raise Crunches

The execution of this variation is exactly the same as with the barbell, the only difference being that you're using dumbbells and they are more unstable as you're doing the exercise.



2. Add a crunch to meet in the middle

To really fire the total abdominal area, you can also do the bench press crunch up at the same time as you do the leg raise. This is a double contraction against resistance that will really fire up the abs!



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#) • [Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#) • [Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#) • [Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#) • [Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Bridging Supports

Total Ab Exercises

Advanced



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is a tough, low-equipment exercise that relies primarily on body position and isometric contraction to really work the abs hard. Your abs will be forced to support almost your entire bodyweight.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need something to brace your hands against. This can be a pole, a doorframe, a strong table leg, a wall corner. When you see how the exercise is done, you'll be able to see how you can adapt it to your available surroundings. I will use a pole for demonstrating the exercise.

Lie on the floor with your shoulder pressed against the pole. Now bring your feet close in to your butt, placed flat on the floor. Grab the post about one foot up from floor and push your palms backward against it.

Now push hard against the pole (back and down) to brace yourself and lift your upper body off the ground. Your shoulder will NOT be braced on the pole - it's only there to be pushed against. All the tension should be in your abs as you push hard against the pole to hold that position.

In that position, your elbows will be very bent and the pole will be right beside your head. Now simply hold this position for as long as you can, pushing hard. Be sure to push hard with your legs as well to keep your position solid. It's this total-body tension that makes the exercise work the abs so strongly - they are the link between the upper body push and the lower body push.



Common Errors

1. Bracing your shoulder

Your shoulder should NOT touch the pole at all. The only thing touching the pole will be your hands. If you brace your shoulder against the pole, it will take away some of the tension of the exercise.

2. Not pushing hard with the legs

To maximize tension (and hold yourself up!), you need to place your feet close to your butt then push hard with your legs. If you just let them sit there, you won't get strong enough tension to hold yourself up.

3. Not tightening the abs

You must squeeze the abs hard otherwise the support requirement will go to the lower back, which is not well-equipped to handle the load in that position.

Be sure to tighten the abs.

Tricks

1. Add a crunch

As you're supporting yourself, raise your head like you're crunching. You won't actually crunch but raising the head will add a little more tension to the exercise.

2. Walk yourself up the pole if you're strong enough

This variation should only be done when you're confident with the exercise and are strong enough to safely perform it. First, brace your shoulder against the pole. Now use your legs and push back VERY hard as you brace that shoulder. Now move your hands up a little on the bar - you will basically be supporting your body with your shoulder and legs as you move your hands. Now move your body up. Repeat this process up until you are almost vertical then work your way back down using the same technique (it'll be easier go back down).





[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Crab Walk Leg Raises

Lower Abs

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Using only body position techniques, you can get excellent tension on the lower abs while simultaneously working abdominal stability.

How To Do It

First, sit on the floor and set your hands behind you and feet fairly close in. If you've ever done a crab walk where you walk around on your hands and feet like a crab, this is just like that position. Make sure your fingers are pointing out diagonally for best balance (you'll see why in a second).

Now lift your butt off the floor - your body will be somewhat bent in the middle. Next, lift your right foot off the ground then your left hand so that you're balancing on opposing limbs (your left foot and right hand will be on the ground). Take a second to get your balance.

Rotate your right leg outwards and bend your knee while tightening the abs. Now bring your right leg up towards your chest while simultaneously bringing your elbow across your body down and to the right to meet your right knee. The rotation of the leg takes the hip flexors out of alignment so they don't have direct line of pull when you do the exercise - the **lower side abdominal fibers** must take over. When you raise the right leg and reach with the left arm while supporting yourself, you get great balancing and cross-tension on the abs.



Common Errors

1. Not setting the hands and feet wide enough

For best balance, be sure you've got your hands and feet fairly wide apart. If they're too close together (in more of a direct line), when you move to the two limb diagonal position, you're going to fall over.

2. Not bending the knee

If you keep the leg straight, the hip flexors will contribute more to the movement, which is not what we're looking for.

3. Moving too fast

This exercise should be done under control. If you go too fast, you'll lose your balance.



Tricks

1. Hands pointing diagonally

For best balance, be sure your fingers are aimed diagonally to the side and backwards. As you push with your foot to keep your balance, you'll need to push directly back with your fingers. If they're not out on a diagonal, it'll be an unbalanced push.

2. Power breathing

As you come to the top, breath out forcefully through pursed lips. This will add a greater dimension of tension to the exercise.

3. Have somebody stand on your stomach while you do the exercise

Just kidding... I'm not THAT crazy!

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#) • [Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#) • [Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#) • [Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#) • [Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Drawn and Quartered

Total Ab Exercises

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

If you're looking for an absolutely incredible amount of tension on the entire midsection, this is the exercise for you. Using direct cable resistance from opposite directions and on a diagonal, you will apply tension unlike any other exercise you've ever tried before.

How To Do It

This exercise requires two low pulleys ideally in the cable cross-over setup. First, attach an ankle harness to your left leg and attach a single cable handle to the other pulley. You will be lying on the floor between the two pulley, attaching your left leg to one pulley and grabbing a single handle with the right arm on the other pulley.

For weight, start fairly light with the leg weight and moderate with the upper body weight (about 2 - 3 times the weight of what's on the leg stack). Set your other foot flat on the ground with leg bent. Keep butt on the floor for this exercise.

Sit on the floor in between the weight stacks and attach the ankle harness to the pulley in front of you. Now lay back and reach back to grasp the single handle behind your head. Now comes the fun!

Do a bent-knee leg raise with your left leg and a cable crunch with your right arm, attempting to meet your two limbs in the middle - basically trying to touch knee to elbow. This gives great cross-tension on the abs, not to mention the incredible tension on the abs when put direct resistance on them from two different directions.

This exercise is faster to do if you have two ankle harnesses you can use. That way you only need to unclip the ankle harness from the weight stack and clip the other one on rather than taking the whole thing off and put it on the other leg before working the other side.



Common Errors

1. Using too much momentum or too light a weight

The benefit of this exercise lies in the tension. If you use too much momentum, you will lose that tension and find that your hip flexors are sore the next day. Also, if you don't use enough weight to get the tension, your abs will have too easy of a time and you won't feel the tension. Definitely start light but don't be shy to work your way up quickly once you get the hang of the exercise.

Tricks

1. Using the same side limbs for a different effect

You can also use the same side arm and leg to feel the exercise differently. Attach your left leg and grasp the handle with your left hand.

2. Going heavy and powerful

You can really work up to some heavy weights with this exercise with practice. When going heavy, start with a powerful movement at the start, following through hard then holding it at the top for a few seconds. This will build power in the core. When doing these heavy sets, let the weight stacks touch in between reps to give your abs a bit of break.

3. EXTREME contraction - wringing yourself out like a wet towel

This variation is done using lighter weight but results an extraordinary contraction on the abs, very much like you're wringing yourself out. Use about half the weight on the leg stack as compared to the upper body stack. Start light with this one as well to get the best idea of how to do it, then progress slowly up. This version is all about the squeeze.

Set up as the standard opposing-limb movement as explained above, hooking your left leg on and grasping the handle with your right hand.

Instead of doing a regular bent-arm cable crunch movement, do a stiff-arm pullover with your arm (your elbow can be somewhat bent to take pressure off the elbow joint). At the same time, do a stiff-leg raise (keep your knee somewhat bent but kept totally stiff). Your arm should come all the way around almost to the floor, going about 180 degrees. When doing this, when you get around to the bottom, push your cable-holding hand FORWARD as hard as possible to maximize tension at the end of the pullover. This push is working directly against resistance and will give a VERY strong contraction in the abs. That's half the movement.

As you get halfway through the leg raise, you will notice the leverage changes and you have a hard time going further on your own. At this point, grab behind your thigh with your other hand and pull hard to help the leg get fully up as far as it can go. As you do this pulling on your thigh, use the grip on your leg to pull yourself up into a crunch. This places tremendous tension on the abs as they are now are not only in their most completely contracted position, they are also doing it against significant resistance from many directions.

You are getting tension from the leg raise, you are getting tension from pushing the cable forward with your hand, you are getting tension from crunching up, you are getting tension from pulling your leg up and pulling yourself up into a crunch.

At this point, there will be curses and swearing. I know this from experience.

Hold for a few seconds then bring your limbs back to the starting position. Do a full set of 4 to 6 reps then repeat on the other side.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

EZ Bar Rollers

Rotational/Obliques

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is a relatively simple exercise that uses an EZ curl bar for movement. You must use abdominal strength to support your torso as you roll the bar from side to side.

How To Do It

This exercise uses an EZ bar (or other similar smaller bar). Place bar on ground and add small weight plates on it. Ten pound weights are fine since you're not actually using the weight as resistance - you're using the weight plates as wheels.

Set the bar directly in line with body so that it's pointing away from you. Kneel in front of one end (you may need padding for your knees if you're on a hard surface). Now set your hands on bar just on the other side of the weight plate nearest you in an overhand grip. If you're rolling to the left, your left hand should be placed closer to you. When you roll right, switch grips so that your right hand is closer to you.

Now, keeping torso pointing straight forward as much as possible (there will be some lateral movement), roll your end of the bar out to the left while keeping the other end weight plate exactly where it is. Your arms will go out to the left but your body should still be pointing straight forward. Roll the bar out to the side until the bar is about 45 degrees off center. Hold that position for a few seconds and feel the isometric tension. Now, using abdominal force, pull your arms back to the start position. Don't just let the bar roll back up - actively squeeze the abs in order to pull the bar back to the start position.

This hits the side abs very strongly for stabilizing and for pulling your body back to the start position. Hold for a second at the top, switch your grip as explained about (move your right hand so that it's now below your left hand) then roll out to the right, following the same execution.



Common Errors

1. Moving too fast

If you roll the bar out too fast, you may find yourself losing control of the bar and falling down. Make sure to do the exercise under complete control - only let the bar move as far as you feel you're able to control.

2. Not keeping the body pointing forward

The point of this exercise is to keep the torso forward as much as possible and let the arms roll out to the side with the bar. Your abs get worked because they have to support your bodyweight at an angle. If you let the torso move too much with the bar, you won't get as much work on the abs.

3. Letting the other end of the bar roll too

Imagine the other end of the bar as a pivot point around which you're moving. It should stay exactly where it is through the entire movement.

Tricks

1. Keep everything tight and take it slow

The movement of this exercise has a very different feel to it. Take it slow and use a shorter range of motion to start to give your body a chance to get used to and so you can gauge how far you are able to go. Keep your abs and lower back nice and tight to maintain optimal stability.

2. Breathe out forcefully on the way up

As you pull yourself back to the start position, exhale forcefully through pursed lips.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#) • [Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Feet on Wall Static Holds

Total Ab Exercises

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

All you need is a wall or other solid surface to work the abs with a strong isometric movement. It's similar to the Plank yet the wall adds a new dimension of tension.

How To Do It

This is a very simple exercise but very effective! First, kneel down in front of a wall so that your feet are against the wall. Now move forward and set your hands on the floor like you're about to do a push-up.

Now comes the hard part -- set your feet flat on the wall about 6 inches off the ground and push backwards **HARD** with your hands to keep your body braced up in the air and perfectly straight.

DO NOT hook your feet on anything or support your legs on anything in any way - just push and hold for as long as you can. Your abs will engage strongly to keep your body locked in that position.



Common Errors

1. Letting your body bend

If you pike your hips, you'll take the tension off the abs, making the exercise easier.

2. Not pushing hard with the arms and shoulders

You must push back against the wall extremely hard to keep your body up. If you don't, you'll break position.

Tricks

1. Do a push-up

For an extra twist, you can even try doing a push-up while in this position. This will not only keep working the abs but will also strongly hit the upper pecs and shoulders as they must exert force backwards at the same as they're pushing the body up.



2. Adding weight

When you get stronger, you can set weight plates or wear a backpack.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#) • [Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#) • [Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#) • [Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Foot Resisted Side Crunches

Rotational/Obliques

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

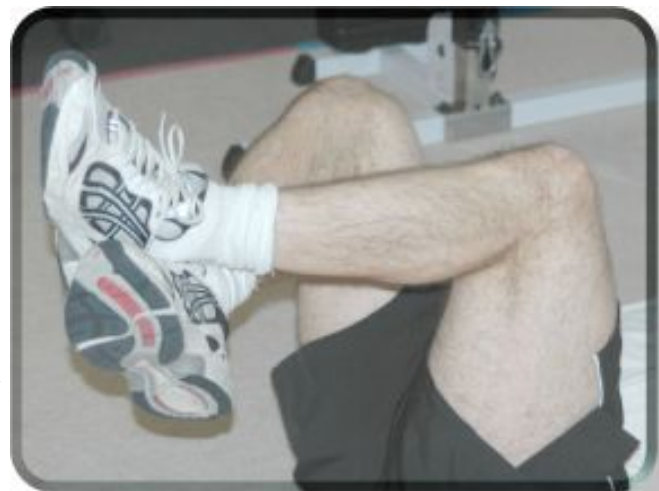
By using your own limbs as resistance and using them to push against each other in specific ways, you can effectively increase the tension on your side abdominal wall while doing crunches.

How To Do It

This exercise primarily works the side and lower abs.

Lay on your back in the normal crunch position. Now raise your left leg and bend your knee 90 degrees. Hold it up in the air. Now brace your right foot UNDER the left heel. Your right leg will be angled out (your right knee pointing out to the right). With your left leg, pull down against your right foot using your left hamstring as though trying to do a leg curl. At the same time, push up against your left heel with your right quad as though trying to do a leg extension. This develops tension in the abdominal area.

Now do a crunch, bringing your right elbow towards your left knee, like a crossing side crunch. The pulling with your hamstring locks out hip flexor action (the hip flexors can't contract when the hamstring is activated and acting as a hip extensor) and the opposing forces generated by pushing with the other leg creates intense shearing and stabilizing force in lower abs.





Common Errors

1. Not pushing/pulling hard enough

In order to get the tension through the abs with this technique, you need to really push and pull with strength. If you just cross your legs, you're not going to get anything more than a regular crunch.

2. Not squeezing the abs

To maximize the effect, really squeeze the abs hard as you crunch up.

Tricks

1. Adjusting resistance

You can adjust the resistance by how hard you push and pull with your legs. Need more resistance - pull down harder and push against harder.

2. Push/pull harder as you come up in the crunch

Self-explanatory - as you crunch up, increase the pushing/pulling force to increase the tension in the abs.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Ground Push-Crunches

Upper Abs

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Looking for an intense contracted-position exercise for the abs but don't have cable equipment to get it? This zero-equipment exercise provides an extremely intense contraction using only body position and bodyweight.

How To Do It

This exercise is quite simple and doesn't actually involve any movement at all. Crouch down and set your fists on the ground about a foot in front of your feet. Don't brace your arms on anything - lock them out straight.

Now push down hard on the ground with your fists as though you're about to try to lift your feet off the ground, shifting your bodyweight forward as you do this. Imagine as though you are about to push yourself up into a headstand. You don't actually do that, you just keep pushing and shifting more bodyweight onto your arms.

This gives an extremely hard contraction on the abs due to the position your body is in. Suddenly, the abs are required to support your bodyweight in their most contracted position.



Common Errors

1. Setting the hands flat instead of using fists

It's important to use the fists on the ground, not placing your hands flat. When you place your hands flat, your triceps will take up a lot of the tension and your body position changes, making the exercise less effective. If the floor is hard where you're at, place a towel or blanket under your fists.

2. Not shifting the bodyweight forward

If you just push down with your fists, you will feel some tension in the abs. The real value comes when you make like you're about to try and lift your feet off the ground. This automatically shifts your weight forward and puts far more tension on the abs.

3. Bracing the arms on the legs

When you brace the arms, some of the supporting tension that should be going to the abs gets taken up in the bracing action. Keep the arms beside (either inside or outside your legs) but not touching them.

Tricks

1. Imagining the headstand

As mentioned above, imagine as though you are about to push yourself into a headstand. This helps you to get the proper feel for how to move your body for best results.

2. Making it harder

To make the exercise harder, lift your butt up higher. That will put more of your bodyweight down on the abs.

3. Do this exercise last

This is a very simple exercise but is very effective, especially when done as one of the last movements in your ab routine. Since it doesn't involve movement but gives a strong contraction, finishing with this will help finish off the abs. It's especially effective when done after an ab movement that involves a stretch position, such as [Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) or [Small Ball Crunches](#).



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Hangin' Crunches

Upper Abs

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

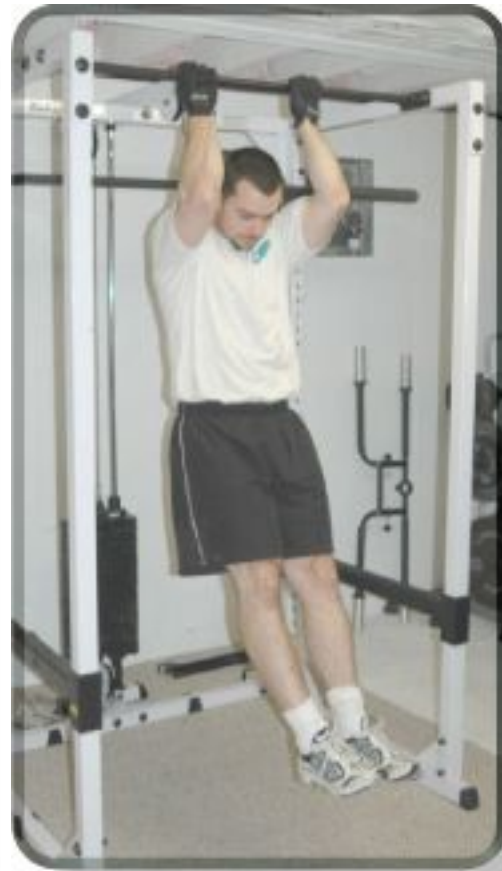
Similar in looks to a leg raise, the Hangin' Crunch uses your lower body for direct resistance but involves the upper abs instead of the lower abs.

How To Do It

This exercise almost looks like a leg raise but isn't. It could be also described as a lower body raise as well as a hanging crunch. Essentially, you are doing a opposite crunch movement. When doing a lying crunch, you bring your shoulders towards your pelvis in a short arc. With the Hangin' Crunch, you are doing the opposite, bringing your pelvis up towards your shoulders in a short arc. These are done hanging because your lower body must be swinging free to provide the resistance.

For this exercise, hang from a chin bar with a "palms-facing-you" grip, arms slightly bent. Now curl your lower body up, mimicking the crunch movement as you're hanging up. It's not a leg raise - imagine as though you're trying to bring shoulders down - not that you're raising your legs up. Because this is NOT a leg raise movement, your hips and lower body should stay absolutely straight.

This exercise has a very short range of motion but the contraction at the top is very good. Hold it for a second or two then lower slowly.



Common Errors

1. Raising the legs

As mentioned above, this is not a leg raise movement, rather it is more of a "drawing up" of the lower body as you're imagining bringing your shoulders down. Since your upper body is locked into position, the lower body is going to move. The hips and lower body should stay perfectly straight.

Tricks

1. Adding resistance

You can hold a dumbbell between your feet in order to add resistance to the movement.

2. Grip enhancement

If you find your grip gives out before your abs get a good workout, you may need to use lifting hooks or straps, especially if you're using extra weight.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Inverse Crunches

Total Ab Exercises

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise is one of the most powerful low-equipment exercises you can do. It uses the weight of your entire lower body and places it directly on the abdominals.

How To Do It

For this exercise, you will need a pole or other solid vertical surface. Even a door frame or solid table leg will work. For this demo, I will use a pole as the example. Lie on your back and brace one shoulder against the pole. Grasp the back side of the pole with both hands about 18 inches up and grip it hard.

To get into the start position, raise your legs up off the floor and slightly bend at your knees and hips. Lock them into this position - your lower back should be flat on the floor at this point or very close to it.

For this exercise, you are going to do a similar movement to a crunch. The major difference here is that instead of you raising your shoulders to bring your rib cage closer to your pelvis (the anatomical description for the way the crunch is performed), you're going to be locking down your shoulders and bringing your pelvis closer to your rib cage. Why is this effective? What weighs more, your shoulder girdle or your entire lower body? THAT'S why it's more effective.

Let's start the movement. Pull FORWARD and DOWN hard with your arms. Since your upper body is locked down and your lower body isn't, this will raise your entire lower body off the floor. This should NOT be viewed like a leg raise. Visualize like you're trying to pull the pole down and forward. Since the pole won't move, your lower body comes up. The pivot point for this exercise is your upper back/bottom of rib cage area, not the hips like in regular leg raises. As you bring the lower body up, exhale through pursed lips.

Bring the legs all the way up as high as you can, squeezing the abs hard. Now lower VERY slowly, fighting gravity on your legs all the way. Stop the lowering phase just before your lower back touches the floor. Be sure you don't let lower back go flat on floor between reps as this will keep the most tension on. Reverse the direction by pulling on the pole again and bring the lower body back up.

This exercise hits the abs from a very different direction and with very different tension. It's something you will most likely never have felt before! Switch which shoulder is braced against the pole on your next set.



Common Errors

1. Doing the exercise as a leg raise

As mentioned above, this is NOT a leg raise! This exercise is not for the lower abs. Visualize that you're still doing a crunching movement with your upper body. Since your upper body is locked down, your lower body must raise up, pivoting from your midback area.

2. Letting the lower back touch the floor between reps

For maximum results, keep the lower back off the floor in between reps unless you absolutely must rest. When you set your lower back down, the tension will come off the abs.

3. Going too fast

This is a very deliberate exercise and you must focus in order to feel it working properly. If you're whipping your legs up and down, you won't feel it properly in the abs.

Tricks

1. Adjusting the difficulty

The difficulty of this exercise can be adjusted in several ways. You can adjust the difficulty by moving your hands closer down to your shoulders, making the exercise harder. The higher you place your hands on the pole (as long as your elbows aren't straight), the easier the exercise will be as your abs will have greater leverage.

You can also adjust the amount of resistance that your abs must workout against by changing how much your knees and hips are bent. If you bring your knees up towards your chest, there is not as much resistance further out from the body and the exercise will be easier. The straighter your legs and hips, the harder the exercise will be. If you're adventurous, you can even try this exercise with ankle weights on.



2. Doing negative training

If you'd like to see how painful negative training is on the abdominals, use the bent-leg body position on the way up then at the top, straighten your legs and lower yourself down. This is best done towards the end of your ab workout.

3. One-handed grip

To send more tension through only one side of the abs, you can also try gripping the pole with only one hand (same side or opposite side, experiment with which you prefer) and doing the exercise. With a one-handed grip, one side of the abdominal wall will receive a lot more of the work. Be sure you've got strong abs before trying this one.

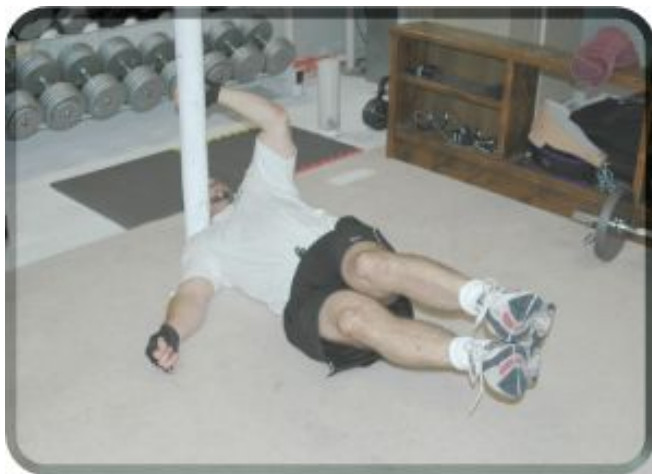


4. Using a towel to anchor yourself

You can loop a towel around a pole or solid object and grab onto the ends. This allows for more versatility in where and how to do the exercise. All you need is something solid that you can get the towel around and you're all set. You can also hold both ends of the towel with one hand in order to do one arm Inverse Crunches. This setup also makes it very easy to switch hands between reps.

5. Side Inverse Crunches

This exercise can also be adapted to work the side abs. Lay on your left side with your right arm gripping the pole (towel is actually easier to grip for this one) with your left arm flat on ground for balance (it can also be used to help move the lower body). Don't lay it directly out to the side but angled towards feet. The exercise is performed in exactly the same manner, pulling down on the pole in order to raise the lower body up. Don't touch your hip to the ground between reps and crunch up sideways.



6. Inverse Bench Crunches

If you're VERY strong in the abs, you can also try this exercise with your upper body on a bench so almost your entire body is suspended in the air (held up only by abdominal tension) as you do them. This should be done only by advanced trainers and even then only after you're very comfortable with the original exercise. Set a flat bench perpendicular to the pole, pressed up against the pole. Set your upper back on the bench and brace your shoulder on the bench as you do on the floor version. Your feet will be on the ground to start. Pull hard on the pole to develop tension in the abs then raise your lower body to the start position. Do the exercise exactly the same from there.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Leg Press Push Crunches

Total Ab Exercises

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise is similar to doing a resisted crunch but the range of motion is much greater and so is the available resistance! You'll develop maximum tension on the abs in their most contracted position.

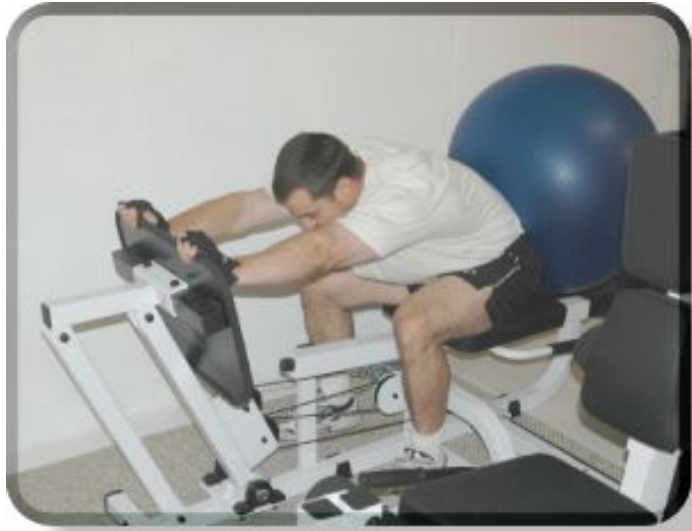
How To Do It

This exercise is best done using a seated horizontal leg press machine rather than a 45 degree angled sled machine. It also helps greatly to have a Swiss ball to brace your back against. This exercise is done pretty exactly like the [Cable Push Crunches](#) only you'll be using the leg press foot plate to push against instead of the cable attachment. This is also a quicker and easier setup.

For best results, move the seat forward as far as you can and set a Swiss ball on the seat behind you. This not only brings you closer to the foot plate but gives your back something to arch back over for greater range of motion. Set a fairly light weight on the machine the first time you do this exercise until you get an idea of how much you can do.

Sit with your back against the ball, set your feet on the floor in front of you (in a typical sitting position) and put your hands over the top edge of the leg press foot plate. Now, using abdominal power, push the foot plate forward, bending over at the waist. Exhale HARD (keeping your lips pursed) as you push the foot plate forward. Squeeze all the air out of your lungs as you push forward as far as you can. This will ensure the maximum contraction on the abs. This also strongly works the breathing muscles. Keep your abs tight the whole time!

Hold a the top for a few seconds then lower slowly. As you come back, allow your back to arch back over the curve of the ball before starting the movement again. This will ensure maximum range of motion.



Common Errors

1. Using too light a weight

Once you've got the hang of the exercise, start adding weight. If you keep using light weight, your abs won't get the strongest contraction possible with this exercise - all you'll be doing is leaning forward.

2. Not exhaling everything out

To maximize the results of this exercise, blow out everything on the way forward. When you're bent over at the waist, you should be using that to squeeze out every last bit of air that you can.

Tricks

1. Two-Up, One-Down Negatives

You can do powerful 2-up 1-down negatives with this exercise because this is a machine. It's very simple - push up with both hands in the standard exercise technique then remove one hand from the foot plate and lower the weight. This is VERY tough!

Use a strong, powerful push to get the weight to the top position then lower slowly. Your abs will be contracting very strongly to work against the torque on your midsection. This is an advanced technique.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups

Total Ab Exercises

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

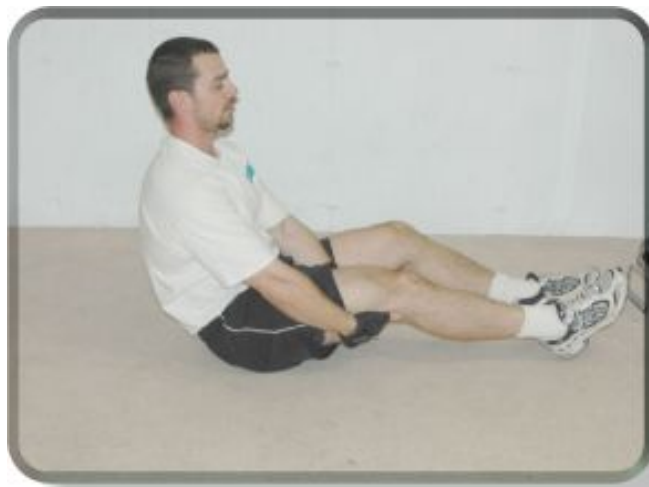
This is an exercise that uses unique body positions and tension from your upper body resisting your lower body to create resistance in the abs.

How To Do It

Lay back on the floor and bring your right leg up like you're doing the glute/hamstring stretch where you pull one knee towards chest. Pull it in close to your chest. For this exercise, you will lock your fingers behind your knee, not hold them in front of your shin.

This is the start position. Now, keep your bottom leg straight and tighten the abs. Push your top leg forward as though doing a leg press movement in the air. At the same time as you're pushing your leg forward, pull back strongly with your arms to resist. Your leg push will be stronger than your arm pullback and the movement will push you forward and up to a sitting position. Be sure to resist strongly with your arms! Lower slowly and repeat.





Common Errors

1. Not using a deliberate push

This isn't an explosive movement. It is a deliberate leg-pressing motion. If you explode up, you won't get much tension on the abs on the way up to the sitting position.

2. Not pulling back enough

If you don't apply resistance with your arms, you won't get a strong contraction in the abs.

Tricks

1. Adjusting resistance

You can adjust resistance by how strongly you pull back with your arms.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs



Lower Abs



Rotational/Obliques



Total Ab Exercises



Exercise Update #1



Extra Topics



*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Momentum Sit-Ups

Total Ab Exercises

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This exercise relies on momentum to work the abs. Instead of using slow, deliberate movements, you will be exploding up to give the abs a very different type of work.

How To Do It

Start in the regular sit-up position, laying back on the floor with your arms overhead and laying flat on the floor. Now raise your legs and roll up onto your upper back.

Drop your legs down quickly then let your feet touch the ground. The moment your feet touch the ground, whip your arms explosively overhead and forward to get momentum to start the sit-up movement. This explosive movement activates the abdominals.

Come all the way up to a full sit-up position then lower your upper body back down. Stop at the bottom then repeat by raising your arms back overhead and laying them on the floor then raising your legs up again. The real work in this exercise is done the moment you whip your arms overhead.

Imagine as though your body is like an elastic band as you lower your legs. At the bottom, it hits it's maximum stretching point then snaps back into position. This exercise is much easier to understand by watching the video as the movement is very dynamic.

This exercise is very good when done after [Inverse Crunches](#).







Common Errors

1. Not using momentum

It's tough to fight the ingrained belief that you shouldn't use momentum in your training. Fight that belief as this exercise relies on momentum to be effective. Momentum is not always the enemy - momentum used improperly is.

Tricks

1. Adding resistance

To increase the momentum effect on the abs, you can do it holding 2 dumbbells in your hands. Start with light dumbbells.

2. Whip arms backwards too

For an extra shot to the abs, as you lay back onto the floor, whip your arms back overhead as well.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Pinchy Sit-Ups

Total Ab Exercises

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Similar in concept to a Janda Sit-Up, the Pinchy Sit-Up increases the tension on the abs by activating other muscle groups during the movement.

How To Do It

This exercise is done similar to a regular sit-up but instead of your feet being hooked under something, you'll be setting them on either side of a pole (for example) or other solid vertical surface that you can squeeze between your feet (such as a table leg, a door or even someone's actual leg will work).

Lay on your back with your legs bent about 90 degrees both at the hips and the knees. Shift yourself closer or further away from your object to get the proper orientation. Now set your feet on either side of the object and squeeze your feet together HARD to anchor yourself, pinching the object between your feet. Don't hook your feet around it - just pinch the object directly on the sides.

Now start by doing a crunch. When you get to the top of the standard crunch, continue on and roll up into a full sit-up. Hold that position for a few seconds, squeeze the abs hard then lower slowly. Be sure to squeeze your feet together hard during the entire movement to anchor yourself and activate the adductor muscles. This adductor activation helps diminish hip flexor activation and send more stress onto the abs for the exercise. This basically looks like a two-part movement - the crunch then the sit-up.





Common Errors

1. Hooking your toes around

Be sure you don't mistakenly hook your toes around the pole or object. The temptation is there but that will activate the hip flexors, which we don't want to do.



Right



Wrong

2. Coming up all at once

For maximum abdominal contraction, make sure you're working this as a two-part movement, coming up to the full crunch position THEN the sit-up.

Tricks

1. Changing and adding resistance

This exercise can be done with weight or without - start without. You can also use arm position to spot yourself - the exercise is harder with your arms behind your head, easier with them in front. If you use a dumbbell for resistance, hold it in front of you, not behind the head to prevent lower back stress.

2. Self-spotting

When you start to fatigue, grasp behind your knees and use your arms to pull yourself up to the full sit-up position then release at the top and lower slowly. This gets the body into most contracted position for the abs even when your abs are fatigued.

3. Small Ball Pinchy Sit-Ups

Set a small ball a few feet from the pole. Lay with your lower back arched over the ball and put your hands on the floor to stabilize while you get into position (the small ball allows your hands to be on floor - it's also not as far to go if you fall over). Now pinch your feet on pole strongly then lift your hands off the floor. Do a full sit-up while on the ball, using foot pressure on the pole to stabilize yourself on it. Set your hands on ground if you feel yourself tipping over.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Side Ab Push-Ups

Rotational/Obliques

Intermediate



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The side abdominal wall is often worked using exercises like side bends. These have a tendency to build the obliques up too much. This exercise tightens the entire side area rather than building up.

How To Do It

Sit on your left side on the floor (with your left hip on the floor) with your left hand propping up your body, fingers pointing directly in line with your body. Keep your left arm straight and locked. Your legs should be extended straight down. Your body will be bent sideways at the waist, like you're about to push yourself up to get up. Your feet should be together, legs straight. If you like, you can brace feet against a solid object like a wall or machine. Place your right hand on your lower left rib cage - this will help you to feel exactly how the abs are contracting as you do the exercise and help you make sure you're doing it right.

Now, using ab contraction, raise your hips directly up in the air until you've come up as high as you can (it will look like a sideways pike position), using your right hand to feel for that ab contraction. Squeeze the side abs **HARD** at the top then lower your body slowly. At the bottom, try to keep your hip off the ground to get a good stretch on the side abs - you can rest it on the floor between reps if you need to, though.

Make sure you are on your side as much as possible throughout the movement - some forward bending is natural due to abdominal function in that area. Try to feel like you're also pushing up with your arm to get the strongest effect on the abs. Lean your head down towards the floor as you come up.

Watch out for lower back on this exercise as this is not a common plane of movement. This exercise really tightens the entire side ab wall strongly. It's practical, functional and requires zero equipment. It's not recommended to that you add weight to this exercise.



Common Errors

1. Moving too fast

DO NOT do this exercise quickly. It's not a common movement and requires a slow, steady contraction. If start bouncing up and down when doing this exercise, you could injure your lower back.

2. Not coming up all the way

Come all the way up until your body is in a sideways pike position, bent at the waist about 20 degrees or so. This will get you the strongest contraction and best results on the abs.

3. Piking forward too much

Don't let your body tip forward too much (some forward bending is natural due to the function of the abdominal muscles in that area). Make sure you do your best to keep your body on it's side throughout the movement.

Tricks

1. Getting a big stretch at the bottom

To get a bigger stretch and make this exercise harder, use your calf as a pivot point. Don't rest your hip on the floor between reps but let your calf touch the ground and raise your feet off the floor. This will allow you to dip down and stretch down a little further at the bottom. Keep your arm locked and straight. Just let your hip stretch down, stretching your side abs strongly. Use your hand to push upwards at the same time to keep your hip off.

2. Change of venue

You can do these not only on the floor but on a bar in the rack or on any other low object. This gives you a different line of pull and can help you get more stretch at the bottom.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Side Claw Pulls

Rotational/Obliques

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

This is a zero-equipment exercise designed to target the side abdominals. It's easy on the lower back as it's done isometrically.

How To Do It

Kneel on the floor with your hands on the floor in front of you. Keep your feet and knees in that position - no moving them. Now walk your hands around to the left side so that your torso is at an angle.

Now push down hard on the ground, using your fingers like claws, and squeeze your side abs hard. Suck in your gut and pull hard with your abs as though trying to pull yourself around to the forward position. Use your claw-grip on the ground to resist this pull. Dig in and don't let your body turn!

Just keep squeezing hard and pretend you're a cat being dragged out from under the bed and you're digging your claws into the floor to stop yourself. Hold for 5 seconds then walk your hands over to the right side and repeat.



Common Errors

1. Not digging the claws in

In order for the exercise to work, you must dig in and resist hard with your hands. If you just keep your pressure light, there won't be much tension on the abs.

Tricks

1. Use this exercise as a side ab stretch

The position your body is in also makes this exercise an excellent side stretch. To maximize the stretch of it, you can actually grab something solid with your hands and pull backwards against it for the stretch.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Towel Cradle Side Crunches

Rotational/Obliques

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

Ordinarily, you would think that supporting yourself with a towel behind your back would make an exercise easier. Not this time! This unique exercise allows you use the towel to take the hip flexors out of the side crunch movement and work the side abs very strongly.

How To Do It

For this exercise, all you will need is a long towel (about 3 feet long is good) and a floor. First, hang the towel around your neck and grab the ends. Slide the towel down your back until it is just below your shoulder blades (positioning is important here - if the towel is too high, it will pull the shoulders forward and change the movement).



With your towel in position, lay back on the floor like you're about to do a crunch - feet on the floor, knees bent 90 degrees. You can set your knees out to the sides a bit as well. Keep holding onto the ends and lay your upper arms flat on the floor.

We'll be coming up to the left in this example. Begin by pulling hard on both ends of the towel to develop tension for the cradle. Now, pivoting on your left elbow, pull very hard with your right arm and come up and across, bringing your right hand to your left knee like you're doing a side sit-up. The left elbow stays on the ground and acts as the pivot point on which your body moves. You will be putting weight and pressure on the left elbow as you sit up and across.

Try to focus on using the pull on the towel to move your upper body up rather than pulling with the abs. The abs will do the pulling but the focus on the arm helps keep the hip flexors out of the movement. Be sure you're pulling hard with both arms to develop tension enough to move the upper body! The majority of this movement should occur from the pulling.

Squeeze the abs and pull hard with your hands all the way to the top and hold. Don't let up on the tension all the way up or down! Alternate sides, coming up to the left then to the right, with each rep.





Common Errors

1. Towel positioning

The towel needs to be placed just below the shoulder blades across your back. If the towel is too high, it will pull the shoulders forward and not support the torso properly when pulling.

2. Towel grip

How you grip the ends of the towel is important. The easiest way to get the proper grip is to loop the towel around your neck then grab the ends from there. Slide the towel down your back and you're ready to go!

Tricks

1. Leg positioning

You can also try holding the leg that you're not coming up towards out straight to help counterbalance the torso. This may help you get the body up as you pull.

2. Try not to use your abs

It sounds strange to say this in an ab book but to really get the benefits of this exercise, you need to concentrate on pulling yourself up with your arms rather than doing an actual sit-up with your abs. Visualize this pull as you do the exercise. The pulling on both sides of the towel creates great tension in the abs. They'll definitely do the work, but if you try to do a sit-up with your abs, you'll activate the hip flexors. Pulling with your arms forces the

abs to work in a very different way.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[**Bonuses**](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Side Towel Rows

Rotational/Obliques

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

It's tough to find good low-equipment rotational exercises for the abs. This exercise uses only a towel and solid object to mimic an excellent rotational cable exercise.

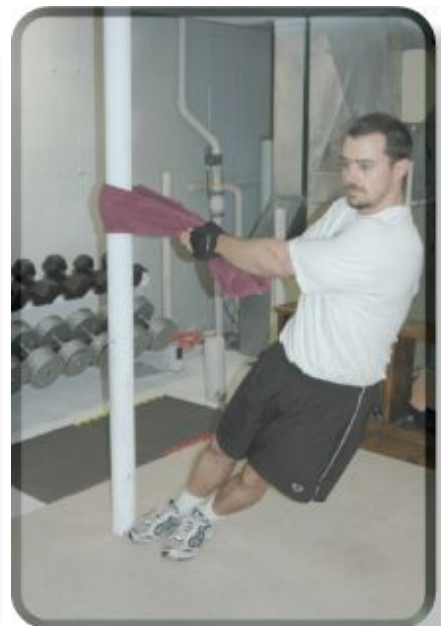
How To Do It

This is a similar movement pattern to the [Cable Gripping Trunk Twist](#) (but without the twist or the cable).

First, loop a towel around a pole or other solid object at about chest level. Grab the ends with both hands and set your feet at bottom of the pole. You should be facing directly sideways. Keep your body stiff and straight. Now lower your body down to the side, letting your arms extend across body as you stretch down.

Hold the stretch for a second then pull yourself up focusing on using the abs for the pulling power (not your back or arms) to get yourself back into the vertical position. Your arm and body position will activate the rotational muscles of the core.

Do a full set then repeat on the other side.



Common Errors

1. Letting the body bend

It's important to keep the body stiff and straight to maximize the effect on the abs.

2. Using the arms or back

Focus on pulling back up using ab power, not by rowing yourself up with your arms or back. Keep the arms fairly stiff while you're doing the movement and feel for the stretch and pull in the abs instead.

Tricks

1. Variations

You can do this exercise with one arm as well or even standing on one foot. This will change the movement pattern and resistance. The arm you should grip the towel ends with is the one that is furthest from the pole, e.g. if your left shoulder is away from the pole, grip with your left hand.



[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#) • [Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#) • [Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#) • [Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lower Abs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rotational/Obliques	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Total Ab Exercises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Exercise Update #1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Extra Topics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls

Rotational/Obliques

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

All you need for this exercise is a weight plate - it strongly works the side stabilizing muscles of the abdominal area.

How To Do It

For this exercise you will need a weight plate (25 lb, 35 lb or 45 lb - anything else is too small to comfortably grip). Kneel down in front of the weight plate, which you will be holding standing on end in front of you.

Stretch your legs back so that your body is extended further and hold the weight plate in the 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock position (this is the position that is most stable and where you will have the most control over the plate). It will look as though you're holding a steering wheel (not in the typical 10 and 2 position but the idea is the same).

Keeping your body forward, roll the plate a quarter turn to the left and hold for a few seconds then back over to the right and hold like you're turning corners in a car. Don't move your hands off the plate as you roll. As you roll in either direction, you will work the abs on that side to stabilize and help bring your body back to the start position. You will also have to stabilize the weight plate itself, which is balanced on end.



Common Errors

1. Rolling too fast

The roll should be slow and deliberate to give your abs time to adjust and contract. Rolling too fast means you could tip over!

2. Rolling too far over

If you turn the plate too far, you will fall over.

Tricks

1. Use the larger plates to start

In this exercise, the smaller plates are actually harder to use as they have less weight, are smaller in size and are therefore more unstable. If you're starting out, use the heaviest weight plate.

2. Making it easier

To make the exercise easier, bring your knees forward. The closer your knees are to the plate, the less torque from your bodyweight will be placed on the abs and the easier the exercise will be.

[Barbell Baton Twirling](#) • [Barbell Lever Pulls](#) • [Bench Press Crunch Leg Raises](#) • [Bridging Supports](#) • [Crab Walk Leg Raises](#)
[Drawn & Quartered](#) • [EZ Bar Rollers](#) • [Feet On Wall Static Holds](#) • [Foot Resisted Side Crunches](#) • [Ground Push Crunches](#)
[Hanging Crunches](#) • [Inverse Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Push Crunches](#) • [Lying Leg Resistance Raises & Crunches](#)
[Lying Pull-Up Roll-Ups](#) • [Momentum Sit-Ups](#) • [Pinchy Sit-Ups](#) • [Side Ab Push-Ups](#) • [Side Claw Pulls](#)
[Towel Cradle Side Crunches](#) • [Side Towel Rows](#) • [Weight Plate Steering Wheel Rolls](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

The Biggest Myth About Flattening the Stomach - Crunches Don't Flatten It Best!

Here's the big secret...crunches won't flatten your stomach...rotational exercises that work the DEEP muscles of the core will flatten the stomach. Doing only crunches and other exercises that work only the front, showpiece, six-pack abs can actually MAKE your abs bulge out, even when you've got low bodyfat!

Want proof? No problem. Here's a scenario that will show EXACTLY what I'm talking about and prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt...

If you had a tensor bandage and wanted to somehow use it to make your your waist appear smaller, how would you use it? Would you attach it to your lower chest and to your thighs, running the bandage vertically? Would you loop it over your shoulder and between your legs? Of course not! You'd wrap it AROUND your waist as tightly as possible.

And here's why doing crunches won't flatten your stomach: the fibers of the Rectus Abdominus (the six-pack abs) run VERTICALLY, starting at your rib cage and attaching down on your pelvis, just like if you were looping the tensor bandage over your shoulder and between your legs. You can work them like crazy and develop that six-pack, but you WON'T get that completely tight waist you're looking for because the muscle fibers simply aren't lined up properly to do that job!

The solution, like I mentioned above, is to work the muscles that are designed for the job: the deep muscles of the core that are arranged AROUND your waist like a girdle... these are called the Transversus and the Obliques (internal and external). While the Transversus wraps directly horizontally around the midsection, the Obliques are the diagonal fibers that are located right over top of the Transversus.

These are the muscles that will really tighten your waist. Don't get me wrong, it's great to develop the six-pack and working the front abs can definitely help you on your way to a flatter stomach, but a really strong and tight waist and flat stomach come from working the rotational exercises.

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

The Importance Of Lower Back Training

While it's great to have strong abdominal muscles and a flat stomach, it's extremely important to devote time to directly working the lower back muscles. Strong abs will actively pull the torso forwards. Without sufficiently strong lower back muscles to help pull back against the spine, you can develop poor posture and appear hunched forward. This can lead to lower back pain.

Think of the guy wires supporting large radio towers as your muscles and the tower itself as your spine. If the wires pulling the tower in one direction are a lot stronger than the wires pulling it in the other direction, you'll have a tower that will start leaning in the strong direction. The same thing happens with your core muscles and your spine.

Be sure to include some form of direct lower back training to help counterbalance your core musculature. Lower back exercises include hyperextensions, deadlifts, and reverse hyperextensions.

Here are some detailed instructions on how to properly perform an exercise called **Hyperextension Crunches** for the lower back. These are different from regular Hyperextensions in that they directly target the extension function of the lower back muscles, using them to move the body, rather than working them as only supporting muscles as with regular Hyperextensions (I will also include instructions for regular Hyperextensions below).

Hyperextension Crunches

How To Do It

- It is better to have a rounded pad for this version but if you don't and the exercise is too uncomfortable, fold a mat up and put it over top of the thigh pads.
- Instead of resting your thighs on the pads, rest your midsection on the pads. The edge of the pad should be just under your rib cage rather than at the hips.
- Suck in your gut for comfort. This is especially important on the way down. If you have a potbelly, this exercise may be uncomfortable. This exercise is NOT recommended if you are pregnant as you will not be able to properly position yourself on the bench safely. Stick to the regular hyperextension.
- Crunch over the edge of the pad, rounding your lower back until your head is down. You can hold your hands crossed in front of your chest if you like.
- Crunch back up using only the spinal erectors. This exercise uses only spinal flexion and extension, not hip flexion and extension, removing the glutes as a prime mover and using them only isometrically. Squeeze hard at the top and repeat.
- The downside to this movement is that it can feel uncomfortable on the abdomen and should not be done by those with large bellies (e.g. pregnant women or overweight people with large, protruding abdomens).
- To ease pressure on the abdomen, inhale and exhale only at the top of the movement and suck in your gut during the movement.



How to incorporate this exercise into your workouts:

This exercise is best done towards the end of your workout.

- Since it works the supporting muscles of the spine, it is best to do this one after you've done exercises that require strong stabilization of the spine, e.g. squats and deadlifts.
- I would recommend doing this exercise last in your workout routine.

Common Errors

1. Not curling the abdomen over the bench

The major advantage of this exercise lies in curling the abdomen, i.e. flexing the spine, over the edge of the bench. If you don't flex the spine, you won't fully work the erector spinae muscles through their full range of motion.

2. Using momentum

Never use momentum on any lower back exercise. This can be very dangerous as it places stress on the spine when it's in a vulnerable position.

Tricks

1. Imagine extending one vertebra at a time as you come up

This imagery will help you to activate the spinal erectors. When you visualize each one extending in a sequence, each of the small spinal erector muscles will fire in order. You can also visualize yourself curling your back around a ball to achieve the same effect.

Regular Hyperextensions

How To Do It

- With your feet hooked under the foot pads and your thighs supported on the pads, bend at the waist.
- Your upper body will be angled down with your head down near the ground.
- Your hands can be held on your chest or behind your head or neck. Holding your hands at your chest will make it easier to do the exercise.
- In a smooth arc, flexing at the lower back, rise up until your upper body is parallel with the ground.
- Do not rotate while doing this exercise as the spine is in a vulnerable position.



Common Errors

1. Using momentum

Do not swing your torso up and down using momentum in an effort to do more reps.

- This will reduce the activation of the lower back muscles as well as introducing the possibility of injury.
- This is especially true at the bottom of the movement where you are changing direction from going down to going back up.
- To ensure there is no momentum involved, pause for a second or two at the bottom of each rep.

Tricks

1. Curling the back

As you start the movement, imagine you are curling your back up and around something as though you had a ball in the small of your back. This will help activate the erector spinae (lower back) muscles.

NEW - Superman Hyperextensions

This exercise is done using the 45 degree Hyperextension bench. First, set yourself in it as you normally would and lower your torso to the bottom of the movement.. Now, take your left foot out from under the pad and set it on TOP of the ankle

pad. Place your left hand behind your back, with the back of your hand resting on your glute (you'll see why in a second).

Now do a hyperextension movement. As you come up from the hyper movement, raise your right arm up and forward in front of you (keeping it straight). At the same time, use your glutes to raise your left leg up a bit. Use your left hand to feel for the proper glute squeeze. Hold for a second then lower everything. Repeat for 4 to 6 reps on one side then switch legs (put left leg under first, then put right leg on top). Do another 4 to 6 reps like this.



NEW - Railing Back Extensions

This exercise requires very little specialized equipment and mimics the everyday movement of bending over very well. It's functional movement that will target the small supporting muscles of the lower back and spinal column. You don't need extra weight to do this one, just a railing or other similar surface to brace yourself against. I like to do this one using the safety rail of a power rack - you can wrap a towel around the rail to pad it if you like.

Set the rack rail to an inch or two below your hip bones. Stand with your hips against the rail, feet planted on the ground. Now curl your body all the way over and down as though reaching down to touch your toes. Come all the way down and relax and feel for a stretch. Your heels can come off the ground a little here to get a bit more stretch.

Now roll your body back up all the way to a vertical standing position. HOW you do it is important. Roll up starting from the lower back, not like a regular hyperextension. It should feel like you're raising your body one vertebra at a time, starting at the base of the spine and letting your torso be pulled up along with it. Basically, you want to lead with your lumbar area, not your head. I'll almost look like you're a marionette being pulled up by a string.

This exercise hits all the small stabilizing muscles of the lower back quite well.

To more closely mimic the 45 degree hyperextension bench, you can also set your feet back about a foot so your lower body is at an angle.



Why This Exercise is Useful:

This exercise helps you to prepare and strength your lower back in a rounded-over position. Why is this important? Sure, you try and lift things with good form by bending the knees and arching the back, but sometimes you simply forget to or you just can't position yourself with the lift. Strengthening the specific muscles (in a controlled movement) that fire in that position can help guard against accidental injury.

This type of awkward-position training is often done in high-level sports where athletes often find themselves in positions where good form is not possible. Having strength in those awkward positions helps prevent injury.

As well, this exercise is useful in that it doesn't require a specialized hyperextension bench. It can be done over the top of a chair or couch, making it an excellent exercise for the person working out at home.

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

10 Things You Can Do To Lose Fat Without Even Trying

Fat loss doesn't have to be painful. Try these simple tips and you'll see just how easy it can be.

- 1. Eat smaller more frequent meals** - not only is your metabolism boosted every time you eat something, your body can more efficiently process smaller meals. Instead of having 3 large meals in a day, try to break them up into 5 or 6 smaller meals.
- 2. Drink more water** - regular water intake helps to flush away waste products in the body. Get at least six to eight 8 oz. glasses per day. An easy way to do this is to keep a water bottle handy and drink from it frequently.
- 3. Be inefficient** - do you need to go to the kitchen to get a couple of things? Break it up into two trips even if you can do it in one. Being inefficient like this can easily double your activity level, burning calories without even trying.
- 4. Eat more protein** - sources of protein include foods such as chicken, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, lean red meats, etc. Your body burns more calories processing protein than either carbohydrates or fats. Protein also helps to support your muscle tissue, which burns calories all day long!
- 5. Take the stairs instead of the elevator** - any time you can add in a little more physical activity, do it. This doesn't mean you need to slog up 20 flights of stairs. Even a flight or two done regularly will add up.
- 6. Don't let yourself get hungry** - when you get hungry you will have a much greater tendency to overeat when you do finally get something to eat. As well, because your body is starting to go into starvation mode, it will be much more likely to hold onto whatever you give it.
- 7. Order small portions at restaurants** - it's tough to order small french fries when "supersizing" your order is such a great "value." Take note, however, your real savings will occur in the calories that don't end up on your backside.
- 8. Eat more fiber** - fiber is very filling. By eating more fiber you will find yourself full sooner. This feeling of fullness will last a long time as well.

9. Wait 20 minutes between servings - your brain takes at least 20 minutes to register that you're full. By waiting that long, you'll give your brain a chance to realize that you don't really need any more food.

10. Cheat on your diet - one thing I always make my clients promise is that they will cheat on their diet. The only thing I ask that they do is to cheat **ONLY** when they have planned to cheat. By planning when you are going to eat the foods you crave, you take back control of your eating habits.

This way you no longer "give in" to your cravings. You "reward yourself" for sticking to proper nutritional habits. Do this once or twice a week and you will feel far more in control of your eating.

In conclusion, if you follow even a few of these 10 easy tips in the long term, you will certainly notice a difference in your overall weight and health.

[**Return to Extra Topics**](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Why We Get Fat - Hunting Big Macs and Gathering French Fries

Are we doomed by our genetics to gain fat? Is your inner caveman causing your waistline to expand? What can we do to work with our ancestry and not against it?

It is important to know why we get fat. Once you know the underlying reasons behind fat gain, you can take that information and apply it to fat loss. Knowing why something happens is the first step towards changing the result.

The one major reason we get fat is that we put in more than we burn off. This may be an overly simplistic view but it's also a very liberating one. It shows you that if fat gain is not that complicated, fat loss is not necessarily that complicated either.

But what are the origins of our body's amazingly efficient fat storage mechanisms? In a nutshell, why do we gain fat so easily?

Your Inner Caveman

Our earliest ancestors did not go to the supermarket to hunt for food. They didn't point at a cave drawing with a Big Mac on it when they were hungry. They did not sit at a desk all day. They didn't drive everywhere they went. In fact, fast food had to be chased down before it outran you!

The daily life of the earliest humans, whom we owe our genetics to, was consumed with getting enough food to survive. In order to eat, they had to either hunt it or gather it. As you can imagine, this burned a lot of calories.

With the start of agriculture, people no longer had to hunt down or forage for their food. They could stay in one place and grow it. Animals were domesticated. They could sell this produced food to others in return for other goods or services. This is known as the Agricultural Revolution and it was the start of our society as we know it.

Agriculture became the primary means of food production in the world. The story changes during the 1900's, however. As we progressed as a society, manual labor was no longer required of most people. Machines were starting to take over more of the hard labor jobs. This led to less and less physical activity by a growing number of people. It was the start of the modern obesity

epidemic.

To sum it up: these days food is plentiful and easy to get and physical activity is no longer a part of daily life.

Thank Your Ancestors

The human body of 50,000 years ago when we were hunter/gatherers is exactly the same as the human body of today. Our body had successfully adapted to continuous cycles of feast and famine. How did it adapt? It adapted by developing extremely efficient fat storage capabilities.

By storing large amounts of fat whenever possible, the body would protect itself against the inevitable famine to come when food was scarce. By storing up large amounts of energy, our ancestors could survive the harsh conditions and thrive. In winter conditions, it would often come down to survival of the fattest, not fittest.

Our bodies are still programmed with this desperate need for storage even though, due to highly available food supplies, we don't really need it anymore. This is the reason you can often put on fat quite easily but have a hard time taking it off. Your body is protecting itself against the famine that it thinks is coming.

Compound this need for storage with reduced physical activity and readily available, calorie-dense foods and you have the recipe that has resulted in rampant obesity in our society today.

Diet = Famine

If you've ever been on a diet you've probably experienced that quick weight loss when you first start then the gradual slowdown and sometimes complete stop in progress that comes after a few weeks.

You can thank your ancestors for this one too. When you dramatically reduce your calories, such as when you begin a diet, your body starts using up the stored fat quickly. Your metabolism is still high and you are losing weight.

The trouble is, your body can't distinguish between the lack of available food known as famine and the voluntary reduction in food known as dieting. To your body "diet = famine." After a short period of time, your body will go into a panic state. You are losing your energy stores too fast and your body will do everything it can to slow down or put a stop to it.

- The first thing that will happen is that your metabolism will slow down. You won't burn as many calories during the day, regardless of how much you are eating or exercising.
- The next thing that will happen is that your body will step up its burning of muscle tissue. Muscles are very metabolically active and require a lot of calories to maintain. Your body knows this and, in its effort to reduce the drain on its energy supplies, will start destroying

muscle tissue. Your body will metabolize your muscle into energy in order to hold onto its fat stores.

This vicious cycle will continue every time you further reduce calories in order to compensate for a slower metabolism. Your body will slow your metabolism down even more and destroy more muscle tissue to reduce energy usage.

How do we avoid this problem? There are a number of ways to approach it:

1. Reduce your calories slowly. If you are trying to lose fat, don't slash your food intake rapidly. This will throw your body into a panic, causing it to grind your metabolism to a halt.
2. Mix up your caloric intake. Don't eat the same things in the same amounts every day. Eat a little more on some days and a little less on other days. It's what you do in the long term that will really affect your results.
3. Exercise. Since most people don't actually have to exercise as part of their daily life, you must take the initiative and make it a point to exercise regularly. It helps by burning calories and giving your body the stimulus to preserve muscle mass (it's the old principle of "use it or lose it" at work).
4. Reduce your intake of processed foods. Your body is not readily equipped to efficiently process Twinkies. Try to stick to foods that are closer to their natural state, such as whole grains, lean meats, etc.

Remember, your body is an extremely efficient fat-storing machine but, with the right knowledge, you can very easily work with your biology and not against it and get the results you want.

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

What Do You Mean Low-Intensity Training Isn't The Best For Fat Burning?

Find out why high-intensity training may be your best bet for trimming your waistline.

But how can this possibly be? Everywhere you look, it's always said that long-duration, low-intensity training is best for fat loss. All high-intensity work does is burn carbohydrates, right?

Wrong.

After reading this article, I guarantee you'll develop a new respect for high-intensity cardio training for fat loss.

Low-intensity exercise is defined as working at a heart rate of about 60% to 65% of your maximum heart rate (which is equal to $220 - \text{your age} = \text{maximum heart rate}$, thus if you are 20 years old, $220 - 20 = 200$ max HR). High-intensity exercise is defined as working at about 75 to 85% or more of your maximum heart rate.

Using the previous example for maximum heart rate (max HR=200), working at 60% of your max HR would be 120 beats per minute and 80% of that would be 160 beats per minute.

There are several reasons low-intensity exercise is normally recommended for fat loss.

1. It's easy - In many cases people who are trying to lose fat don't always feel energetic enough to do hard training due to the caloric deficit (a.k.a. diet) that they are on. In these cases, just sticking to an exercise program can be hard enough, never mind making the exercise itself challenging.

2. It's low risk - A personal trainer generally can't go wrong by recommending low-intensity exercise to clients. Even the most out of shape person can usually do low-intensity cardio training safely. While this is certainly appropriate advice for novice trainers, it does not necessarily apply to the more experienced trainer when it comes to effective training.

3. It burns a higher percentage of calories from fat - this is very true: exercising at a lower

intensity does burn a higher percentage of calories from fat than high-intensity exercise. But, as I will explain, this does not necessarily mean you're going to burn more fat.

Let's crunch some numbers to show you exactly what I mean when I say high-intensity exercise burns more fat.

Low-intensity training burns about 50% fat for energy while high-intensity training burns about 40% fat for energy. This is not a huge difference.

Say, for example, walking for 20 minutes burns 100 calories. Then 50% of 100 calories is 50 fat-calories burned.

Now say 10 minutes of interval training at a high intensity burns 160 calories. Well, 40% of 160 calories is 64 fat-calories burned.

By doing the high-intensity work, you've just burned 14 more fat calories in half the time. Starting to sound good? There's more...

Low-intensity exercise only burns calories while you are actually exercising. That means the moment you stop exercising, your caloric expenditure goes back down to nearly baseline levels. Within minutes, you're not burning many more calories than if you hadn't done anything at all.

High-intensity exercise, on the other hand, continues to boost your metabolism long after you're done (often up to 24 hours after, depending on the length and intensity of the training session). This means you're continuing to burn many more calories all day long!

Low-intensity exercise does nothing to build or support muscle mass. Maintaining muscle mass is critical to an effective fat-loss strategy as muscle burns fat just sitting there. Want to keep your metabolism working to burn fat? Do whatever you can to build or keep your muscle tissue.

High-intensity exercise has the potential to increase muscle mass. Compare the body of a top sprinter to a top marathon runner. The sprinter carries far more muscle mass. You won't get big bulky muscles from high intensity training but you will get shapely and more defined muscles!

How To Do It

Now that you've seen how effective high intensity training can be for fat loss, how is it done?

The absolute easiest way to start this type of training is to get on a cardio machine at the gym

and select the interval training program. As you'll see, you'll start off with a fairly light warm-up cycle, then quickly jump up to a high intensity level for a short burst. You will then drop back down to a low level for a period of time, then back up to a high level again, repeated several times and finishing with an appropriate cool-down period.

The repetition of these intervals is the nuts and bolts of high intensity interval training. You can also do it manually by adjusting your intensity level up and down over short periods of time.

For example, do 30 seconds at high power then 30 seconds at low power. Repeat. It's very simple and very effective.

Another excellent method for doing high-intensity training is called aerobic interval training. It is essentially the same concept as the previously explained interval training but the work intervals are longer with the intensity level somewhat lower. A good example would be running at a pace that you can only keep up for about 5 minutes then walking for 2 minutes then running 5 more minutes, walking 2 minutes, etc.

High-intensity training can be applied to any form of cardiovascular exercise. Anything from walking/sprinting to swimming to bike riding will work perfectly. I would recommend doing his type of training 2 to 3 times per week for best results. As always, be sure to consult with your physician before starting any exercise program.

Remember, what you get out of exercise is directly proportional to what you put in. Work at high-intensity training for awhile and see just how much better your fat-loss efforts go.

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

The Insider Secrets of Interval Training - Learn How Now!

High Intensity Interval Training is extremely effective for fat loss and for dramatically improving your cardio capabilities. Learn exactly how to perform Interval Training for maximum results.

Without question, High Intensity Interval Training is one of the most effective means available for rapidly losing bodyfat and improving your cardiovascular conditioning. Not only do you burn many more calories while you're performing the training, you also stimulate your metabolism to a far greater degree than with lower intensity training, which is traditionally hailed for fat loss.

You're going to learn exactly how to perform various types of high intensity interval training to maximize your results. For a full discussion of the advantages of high intensity training over low intensity training, read the article "[What Do You Mean Low-Intensity Training Isn't The Best For Fat Burning?](#)", which explains it detail.

Even though it's more challenging than low intensity training, High Intensity Interval Training offers tremendous benefits to you:

1. It burns more calories than low intensity training, meaning you can burn more fat in shorter workouts.
2. Higher intensities stimulate your metabolism far more AFTER the workouts than lower intensity training. This means you continue to burn calories and fat for long periods after you're done training. Not so with low intensity training.
3. Training at higher speeds, such as with high intensity training can dramatically improve sports performance. Football players can sprint faster and recover more quickly between plays. Tennis players can keep chasing down balls during longer points. Even endurance athletes can benefit by teaching their bodies to work at a faster pace!

In general, interval training is best done 2 or 3 times per week. It is a challenging form of cardio and requires recovery time in between sessions. Interval sessions can last anywhere between 5 to 30 minutes or more, depending on the fitness level of the trainer and the style of intervals

being done.

How To Do It:

Interval training is based on a very simple concept: go fast then go slow. Repeat. It sounds easy, but within this simple formula lies a tremendous number of possible variations and strategies you can employ to take full advantage of the power available to you.

Interval training can be performed on almost any cardiovascular machine (including the treadmill, stair machine, stationary bike, elliptical trainer, etc.) as well as almost any type of cardiovascular exercise (such as cycling, swimming, running, etc.).

Though the examples I will go through below use time as a measure for intervals, you can also very easily use distance as your guide. For example, you can sprint between two telephone poles then walk to the next one. You can sprint the length of a football field then walk the width. You can even run up a flight of stairs then walk back down. The variations you can do are truly endless!

Here are a number of different types of interval training you can use:

1. Aerobic Interval Training

Aerobic Interval Training is very beneficial for rapidly improving your aerobic conditioning as well as burning fat. It will even help you build up your endurance faster than long-duration cardio! It is also a very good introductory format for starting interval training. If you are new to interval training, I highly recommend beginning with Aerobic Intervals.

This type of interval training involves relatively long work periods and shorter rest periods. Work periods are generally 2 to 5 minutes long in this type of training. The idea is not to take it easy for that work time but to work at a speed that challenges you to be able to make it to the end of that work interval. Your 2 minute interval pace is, therefore, going to be significantly faster than your 5 minute interval pace.

The rest interval for this type of training is between 30 seconds to a minute. Naturally, the shorter the rest period, the tougher the training will be. Too much rest will allow your body to recover too much, lessening the overall training effect of the exercise.

Here are some examples of a number of different intervals you can use in your training:

Work	Rest
2 min.	30 sec.
5 min.	1 min.
3 min.	45 sec.

2 min.	1 min.
5 min.	30 sec.

When using these intervals, you can choose to stick to the same time intervals (e.g. do 2 minutes hard and 30 seconds slow for the duration of the workout) or mix it up with different time intervals as you go through your session. This type of training can generally be done for about 20 to 30 minutes.

2. Maximal High-Intensity Intervals

This type of interval training is VERY high intensity and is VERY effective for fat loss and cardio training. You essentially push yourself to the maximum on every single work interval you do! This type of training is extremely effective when training for sports that require all-out repeated efforts, such as football, soccer, hockey, etc. If you want to get faster and recover faster, this is the type of training for you.

This type of training sends very powerful signals to the body and the metabolism. In addition to dramatically ratcheting up the body's metabolism, maximal-effort training also causes large amounts of Growth Hormone, one of your body's primary fat burning hormones (the Fountain of Youth Hormone, as it's sometimes referred to) to be released into the bloodstream. This two-pronged effect is very powerful for fat-burning.

Maximal Intervals are much shorter than Aerobic Intervals. Generally, the longest you'll be able to perform a maximal effort is around 30 seconds so all the work intervals are 30 seconds or less.

Rest periods can be short or long, depending how good of shape a person is in and/or how much they want to recover inbetween intervals. Shorter rest periods make the work intervals more challenging but the speed of the work will also drop quickly after a few intervals. Longer rest periods will allow the body to recover a little more, allowing faster speeds on more intervals. Rest periods should always be at least as long as the work periods. This is to allow enough recovery to be able to perform well on the next work period.

Here are some examples of Maximal work and rest intervals you can use in your training. As I mentioned above, you can stick with one time period through the whole session, or vary your intervals you go through the workout.

Work	Rest
30 sec.	30 sec.
30 sec.	1 min.
20 sec.	1 min.
10 sec.	30 sec.
30 sec.	2 min.

Since Maximal Intervals are so challenging, a person should not expect or try to be able to jump

right in at a high level for a large number of intervals. It is very important to build yourself up gradually.

Start by performing five Maximal Intervals the first two sessions you do the training. The next two sessions, do six Maximal Intervals. Continue adding intervals in this step-up fashion until you are doing intervals for a maximum of 15 minutes straight. The exact number of intervals you do in a session will depend on the times you're using in your work and rest intervals.

Because Maximal Intervals are so challenging, you may find yourself getting too fatigued to perform at a fast pace as you get towards the end. When this happens, try doing Reverse Pyramid intervals. Instead of keeping your work interval the same, reduce it by 5 seconds every couple of intervals.

Here's a sample of how to do it:

Interval 1 - 30 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.
Interval 2 - 30 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.
Interval 3 - 25 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.
Interval 4 - 25 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.
Interval 5 - 20 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.
Interval 6 - 20 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.
Interval 7 - 15 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.
Interval 7 - 15 seconds hard, 30 seconds rest.

3. Sub-Maximal High Intensity Intervals

Sub-Maximal intervals are excellent for burning fat and for building up your cardiovascular conditioning. This type of training will do each of these fat better than continuous-tempo, lower-intensity training.

This type of interval training is very similar in concept and execution to the Maximal interval style. The difference is, instead of pushing yourself as hard as you can on each work interval, you work at a pace that is somewhat below your max. This allows you to do more total work intervals during the session while still keeping your intensity levels high.

Most Interval programs on cardio machines follow this principle. The resistance/speed is increased to a higher level for a set period of time then reduced for a set period of time. The level is not so high that you must put your maximum effort into each work interval, but it is at a level you could not keep up for long periods.

This type of training is also very effective for fat loss and increasing the metabolism.

Intervals in this style can be longer, since you're not working at maximum speed, but not much longer. Work periods of 30 seconds to a minute and rest periods of 30 seconds to a minute work well for it. Here are some sample intervals you can use in your training:

Work	Rest
30 sec.	30 sec.
30 sec.	1 min.
1 min.	1 min.
1 min.	30 sec.
45 sec.	45 sec.

This type of training can be done for about 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the intensity level of the work.

4. Near-Maximal Aerobic Intervals

This is a unique form of interval training that I've been working with that basically combines Aerobic Interval Training with Maximal Interval Training to allow you to work at near-peak levels for long periods of time. This has the benefit of burning a tremendous amount of calories for longer periods of work time than is possible with normal intervals.

The work intervals themselves are short but the rest periods are much shorter! Instead of pushing yourself to the max on every interval, you work at a pace somewhat short of your max. This type of training allows you to perform near your max for longer periods of time. It is a very challenging and unique form of interval training.

Here's how it works:

Start with a work interval of 20 seconds and a rest interval of 5 seconds. Your pace should be one that you would only be able to keep up steady for about 1 to 2 minutes before having to stop. Do that pace for 20 seconds then go very slow for 5 seconds. Jump right back in and do that same pace for another 20 seconds then very slow for 5 seconds. Keep this cycle repeating for a designated period of time, e.g. 5 minutes, 10 minutes or 15 minutes.

Here are some sample intervals you can use with this training style:

Work	Rest
20 sec.	5 sec.
25 sec.	5 sec.
30 sec.	10 sec.
15 sec.	7 sec.
40 sec.	10 sec.

This type of training works very well with cardio machines that allow you to switch resistance instantly or very quickly (stationary bikes, stair machines or elliptical trainers often allow this). Machines that must cycle slowly through their speeds as they change do not work well for this

(treadmills fall into this category). It can also be done with running then walking, cycling then pedalling slowly, or even swimming hard then stroking lazily. You'll find it very challenging to be having to constantly restart your momentum from almost scratch on every interval!

Please note: it's very important that you don't stop completely when you take your short rest period. Keep yourself moving during this time even if you're just moving very slowly!

5. Fartlek Training

No discussion of Interval Training would be complete with a reference to Fartlek Training. Translated from Swedish, "Fartlek" literally means "speed play." What is it? It's simple - Fartlek training is every type of interval rolled into one workout!

You can start by jogging for 5 minutes then walk for 30 seconds then sprint for 30 seconds then walk again then run fast for 2 minutes and so on. The idea is to train at a wide variety of speeds, distances and times in order to hit the widest variety of training parameters.

This type of training is an excellent way to keep your cardio interesting. You never have to do the same thing twice! This workout can last anywhere from 15 to 40 minutes, depending on the intensity at which you are working.

In conclusion, Interval Training is not a hard concept to wrap your head around: go fast then go slow! The various types of interval training I've explained above will definitely help you achieve your goals, whether they be rapid fat loss, high-powered sports performance or amazing cardiovascular capacity!

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

*The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of*
BetterU, Inc.

Fat-Loss Circuit Training - Now is the time to try this revolutionary fat-burning, metabolism- boosting training technique!

**Experience a training technique so powerful you can literally
FEEL your metabolism firing up and burning fat!**

Want to burn off that holiday weight gain as quickly as humanly possible? Fat-Loss Circuit Training is the BEST place to start.

Fat-Loss Circuit Training is a program of my own invention. I developed it for losing fat quickly. It's challenging but very effective! It's also one of the core components of my extremely powerful "**Metabolic Surge - Rapid Fat Loss**" program available at <http://www.fitness-ebooks.com>.

Fat-Loss Circuit Training is very simple once you get the hang of it, but it can be one of the most demanding (and most extraordinarily effective) styles of training you can do.

If you're familiar with normal circuit training (with timed, light-weight intervals), please put aside any notions you might have of how this program works. You will not only be harnessing the muscle-building and metabolism-stimulating power of intense, full-set weight training (NOT the typical light-weight, timed intervals of normal circuit training), you will also be incorporating the great calorie-burning effects of cardiovascular training.

The proper combination of the two styles (weights and cardio) into one workout is, quite simply, phenomenal for fat burning.

In order to use Fat-Loss Circuit Training, you will need access to both weight equipment and cardio equipment (and/or benches or stairs), preferably located in fairly close proximity to each other.

This type of training is harder to do in a crowded gym as it will involve you moving back and forth quickly between different pieces of equipment. If someone is waiting to use your cardio machine

the moment you step off, it will defeat the purpose of the workout. This technique is best used in a fairly uncrowded gym where you have more freedom to use equipment or, better yet, in a home gym with weights and cardio equipment and no one waiting for anything!

If you do work out in a crowded gym, I will tell you exactly how to get around it.

How The Training Works:

- Essentially, this is combined circuit/interval training.
- You will be going back and forth between your weight training exercises and one cardio exercise for the duration of the workout.
- Your rest period for weights will be your cardio and your rest period for cardio will be your weights.
- You will be doing some sort of activity for your entire workout without any break!

This combination is very effective for a number of reasons:

- It forces your body to burn calories continuously during the workout.
- It utilizes resistance training and cardio training so you get all the benefits of both in one workout.
- By forcing your body to work like this, you dramatically increase your metabolism leading to increased fat burning long after the workout (more so than either weights or cardio alone).
- It saves time - you get both your weights and cardio in the same amount of time as your regular workout.
- You will still be able to use heavy weights in your weight training, helping to preserve muscle mass.

How To Do It:

Step 1 - Set Up

For the most efficient workout possible, try to have most or all of your exercises pre-set and ready to go. The less time you spend on preparation during your workout itself, the more effective that workout will be, especially since you want to be continually active throughout the workout. You can use any type of cardio that is convenient and enjoyable to you, be it a machine, stair stepping, or even a skipping rope.

If you are working out in a crowded gym, try to claim an area for yourself and focus on dumbbell exercises. You won't have to wait in line to use any weight machines that way.

If you don't have access to convenient cardio machines, you're going to have to go low-tech. You'll need to do stair-stepping (stepping up two stairs then back down works well), bench-stepping (step up onto a flat bench or Step platform then back down) or rope-jumping (be sure you're not close to anyone if you choose this). These approaches work just as well as cardio machines and allow you to perform this training style in a busier setting.

If the stair-stepping method is what you need to use, have a look at the stepping pattern demonstrated on the following page:

<http://www.fitstep.com/Misc/Newsletter-archives/issue31-stepping.htm>

Step 2 - Warm-up

Do a few minutes of low-intensity cardio as a warm-up. You may wish to do a few light sets of a few of the exercises you'll be working with before you start into it though. Don't tire yourself out, just get a light sweat going.

Step 3 - Start with 30 - 40 seconds of moderate intensity cardio.

This could be setting a stair machine to a level that is not easy but is not so challenging that you're going to exhaust yourself right away. Watch the timer on your machine and go for approximately 40 seconds (I say approximately because there will generally be a slight lag time when you step on and off).

Many cardio machines have a "rest period" feature where you can leave the machine on and it will not erase your program while you have stepped off. Normally, this is about 2 minutes. This should be enough time to complete your weight set.

If you are using a machine such as a treadmill or stair machine that you will leave on with the timer running, just watch the time counter on the machine and keep track of when you get on it to get the designated period. It may require a little mental math! You can also use your own stopwatch or timer on your watch to keep track (this is easier). Start the timer when you start the cardio.

Many machines also have a feature that runs through a series of time periods. I've found on the StairMaster, if you set the length of the session to 20 minutes, this results in a 40 second time period making it perfect for judging your cardio periods.

Step 4 - Do a set of weights.

Go as quickly as you can to your first exercise. Do a set of the first exercise on your program for the day. Do this with no rest, going from the cardio immediately to the weights. Do all your reps until you start to approach muscular failure.

While this is definitely still intense weight training, don't push yourself to muscular failure as you would in your regular training. Due to the high training volume we'll be doing in this program, pushing to failure on every set will compromise muscle recovery.

Also, be very sure to use proper form and tempo when lifting the weights. Don't rush your weight

sets - perform them with the same form and speed as you would if you were doing a regular set in your training. Fast, light or sloppy weight sets are NOT what we're looking for here.

Step 5 - Go right back to the cardio.

Get back to the cardio and do another 40 seconds of moderate-intensity cardio.

Step 6 - Repeat the cycle for the duration of the workout.

You will be going back and forth continuously between cardio and your weight training exercises, using the cardio as the rest period between your weight sets. What this means is that over the course of your workout, you'll be burning calories via cardio and weights AND you'll be working your muscles with intense, heavy weight training as well. It's tough training but very effective!

In practice, the program will look something like this:

1 set chest
40 seconds cardio
1 set chest
40 seconds cardio
1 set chest
40 seconds cardio
1 set chest
40 seconds cardio
1 set back
40 seconds cardio
1 set back
40 seconds cardio
1 set back
40 seconds cardio
1 set back

etc.

Notes:

- As you improve your cardio ability, you can choose to increase the intensity of your cardio training between sets. You may wish to start at a lower level and gradually increase the resistance over the course of the workout or start at a higher level and keep it there. It is perfectly acceptable to keep it at a steady, moderate level, however.
- This Fat-Loss Circuit technique can be used with nearly any form of cardio exercise as long as it is convenient to go back and forth with the weights. The real key here is to maintain activity for the entire workout.
- Keep your workouts to no more than 45 minutes at the very most when doing this type of

training. Any more than that and you will be breaking yourself down too much. It's an extremely demanding form of training as you'll be working every major energy system in your body. You will also find it will crank your metabolism up pretty seriously!

For a sample workout to follow, taken directly from my "**Metabolic Surge - Rapid Fat Loss**" ebook, please click on the following link:

<http://www.fitstep.com/metabolic-surge/course/day1.htm>

You will be able to print this workout and take it to the gym with you to try out.

Want to order "**Metabolic Surge**" right now for the low price of only \$29.95? Click on the following link to order:

<http://www.fitstep.com/metabolic-surge/purchase-metabolic-surge.htm>

Your new body is waiting for you!

[**Return to Extra Topics**](#)

Upper Abs 	Lower Abs 
Rotational/Obliques 	Total Ab Exercises 
Exercise Update #1 	Extra Topics 

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

I Didn't Realize How Important Protein Was For Fat Loss Until I Discovered Something That Blew My Mind...

The year was 1992. I had just finished a long cycle of weight gain whereupon I had moved my bodyweight up from about 150 pounds to about 215 pounds. And let me just tell you, it wasn't all muscle!

I hadn't been all that careful about my diet previously but I thought I knew pretty well what I was doing. It was time to lose some of that fat.

The first thing I did was make the biggest mistake a dieter can make: in my focus of trying to eat only low fat foods, I unwittingly and drastically reduced the amount of protein that I was eating.

The result? I lost weight and plenty of it. The problem was, I lost mostly muscle! I was smaller, weaker, lighter and nearly as fat as I was before. Not quite the results I was looking for.

In retrospect, I know exactly what I did wrong and it's something I'll never do again.

I FORGOT ABOUT PROTEIN!

Protein is an extremely important nutrient whether your goal is to lose fat, gain muscle or just tone yourself up. It is the main structural nutrient in your body, making up the bulk of your muscles and organs. Protein is essential for proper hormone function and immune system health. Most importantly, for our purposes, protein is used for building and repairing muscle tissue.

When you are trying to lose fat, you reduce your calories. Unfortunately, your body views fat stores as more precious than your muscle tissue and will tend to eat up muscle tissue before it goes to fat for energy. This physiological adaptation used to protect our ancestors from famine but works against us now.

This is very unfortunate because muscle tissue is a great calorie-burner. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn even when you're doing absolutely nothing! Protecting your muscle tissue makes fat loss so much easier, it will amaze you. Not only that, it will help you keep that fat off permanently!

What can you do to protect your muscle tissue?

The first thing you can do is exercise. Exercise, especially resistance training, provides a stimulus for your body that sends it a signal saying "keep this muscle, you're going to need it."

The second thing you can do is provide your body with enough protein. This can be in the form of food or supplements.

Good food sources of protein include chicken, fish, eggs, lean meats, legumes (beans), soy, and dairy products. Protein supplements are derived from food sources but are concentrated for convenience and effectiveness.

How much protein do you need?

The standard recommendation for athletes is between 1.2 to 1.7 grams per kilogram of bodyweight per day (or 0.5 to 0.7 grams per pound of bodyweight per day), though some research indicates a ratio as high as 2 grams per kilogram of bodyweight per day (0.9 grams per pound) is beneficial. This means if you weigh 150 pounds, you should try to eat between 75 and 105 grams and up to around 135 grams of protein per day.

Essentially, you should experiment with your protein intake to find out what works best for you. As far as importance in your supplement program goes, I would rank protein as next in importance to a good multi-vitamin.

When I made my first grand attempt at fat loss, I made the mistake of neglecting protein and it cost me. Don't make the same mistake I did!

Protein Part 2

How to Maximize The Results You Get From Your Protein Powder. Timing Is Everything!

Whether it be for fat loss or muscle gain, I always recommend taking a good protein supplement. The reason for this is simple: it is a convenient way to get high-quality protein without excess calories.

Be aware, however, that in no way am I advocating that you live on protein powder (like the dangerous Liquid Protein diets that used to be popular) alone. The key point to understand here is that a protein supplement is exactly what the name suggests: a supplement. It should be taken in addition to a nutritious diet in order to achieve a certain purpose, in this case increased protein intake.

Protein powders and protein bars can also be used as meal replacements on occasion, especially when you are on the go. They are far more nutritious than a fast food meal and more convenient.

The most popular and highest quality protein powder is whey protein. Whey is very digestible and is used efficiently in the body.

You can maximize the effects you get from your protein supplement simply by knowing exactly when to take it. Here is a list of the when, why and how of effective protein supplementation, ranked in order of importance.

1. Immediately After A Workout

If you only take protein once per day, this is the absolute best time to take it. Immediately after you finish your workout, your body needs raw materials to rebuild and recover with. If you don't supply the raw materials through eating, your body will break down muscle from elsewhere in your body in order to rebuild the damaged areas. This is very counterproductive as you can well imagine.

By taking in some protein (20 to 30 grams or so) within minutes after exercise, you provide your body with the raw materials it needs to recover without breaking down its own muscle tissue.

2. An Hour After A Workout

About an hour following a workout, your body has settled down from the excitement and is ready to really start rebuilding. The protein that you took in immediately following the workout has been metabolized and your body is looking for more. Another protein shake at this time is a good way to help speed recovery. Try to take in another 20 to 30 grams about an hour after working out.

3. First Thing In The Morning

Immediately upon waking, or as soon after that as you can manage, take a scoop of protein powder. Your body has just been through an (approximately) 8 hour fast and is hungry for nutrients. Feed your body!

Protein powder is more quickly assimilated than solid food and gets into your muscles faster. This protein shot gives your metabolism a boost, which can help with fat loss. Be sure to follow it with a good breakfast, of course.

4. Last Thing At Night

Prepare your body for the long overnight fast by giving it a little something to work with. A good combination for this purpose is to mix a scoop of whey protein in with a small glass of milk.

Whey is what's known as a "fast" protein, meaning that it's digested quickly, while milk protein (casein) is what's known as a "slow" protein, meaning it's digested relatively slowly. At night, you want your protein to be metabolized slowly so that your body gets a more even supply over the course of the night. By mixing "fast" and "slow" proteins, you get the benefits of the higher-quality whey with the slower digestion time of the milk.

5. In-between Meals

A quick protein shake can be a great snack in between meals. It helps keep your body supplied with protein all day long. This is especially useful if you tend to have long periods of time in-between meals. It could mean the difference between losing muscle and building or keeping muscle!

6. With Meals

Taking a protein supplement with meals is a handy way to increase the protein content of a meal. This is perfect for when you ake a meal that is somewhat low in protein.

7. In The Middle Of The Night

This is a trick that bodybuilders sometimes use in order to keep their muscles supplied with protein throughout the night. Keep a pre-mixed protein shake right beside your bed. Although some trainers have been known to set alarms to wake up to drink it, I prefer to have it there waiting just in case I wake up, but I don't try to wake up on purpose. If I don't wake up, it's right there ready for me to drink first thing in the morning! This strategy is more targeted for muscle growth rather than fat loss.

WARNING!

Never drink a protein supplement immediately before working out!

Some people do this thinking that it will give them an energy boost or give them a head-start for post-workout recovery. Basically, all it does is sit in their stomach and bloat them up. Valuable blood that should be going to working muscles gets sent to the digestive system to try and digest it. The same warning goes for taking protein during a workout. Don't do it!

By following these protein-intake recommendations, you will increase the effectiveness of your supplementation. Even if you choose to take advantage of only one or two of these timing techniques, you will certainly see an improvement in your recovery ability.

Protein Part 3:

The Best Protein Powder and How To Get It Dirt Cheap!

Without a doubt, whey protein is king when it comes to protein quality and digestability. Ironically, whey used to be considered a useless by-product of cheesemaking and was just dumped into ponds as waste!

There are two main classifications of whey protein, which are essentially based on how processed the whey is. The two forms are whey isolate and concentrate. The major difference between the two is that whey isolate is more processed and is thus a purer source of whey. Whey concentrate is still a very high quality protein however.

If you have the money to spend, whey isolate is the higher quality protein. If you're looking to get the most protein bang for your buck, I'm going to let you in on a little secret:

Whey concentrate is very nearly as good as isolate and is a whole lot cheaper!

I would compare it to driving a sports car. Imagine whey protein as the Ferrari of protein. It is a top-quality protein and a top-quality car. If you put a manual transmission into that Ferrari, you are going to get more performance out of it. This is what happens with whey isolate as compared to whey concentrate. Whey concentrate is your basic Ferrari, while whey isolate is your souped-up Ferrari.

My favorite protein supplement, which I always recommend to clients and friends, is the EAS brand whey concentrate protein powder called "Simply Protein."

EAS is a very high-quality, well-known brand name and is a pioneer in scientific supplement development. They know their stuff!

But here's the best part...

I know an online store where you can get this protein powder at a fraction of the price you would pay at a regular retail store. Let me throw some numbers at you.

For 2 pounds of whey isolate you will generally pay anywhere between \$29.95 and \$39.95.

For 5 pounds of EAS whey concentrate at the online store I will tell you about, you will pay only \$27.95 (as of Feb 22, 2006). For this exact same brand at a retail supplement store, you will most likely pay around 35 to 40 dollars for a 5 pound tub.

When you break down the numbers, it looks something like this:

Whey Isolate: \$15 to \$20 per pound

EAS Whey Concentrate Retail: \$7 to \$8 per pound

EAS Whey Concentrate Online Store: \$5.50 per pound

I've been using and researching protein supplements for the past 16 years and I have yet to find a better deal on this high a quality of protein.

Use this link and go get some today!

[Click here](#)

p.s. the best part is they only charge a flat rate of \$5.95 for shipping regardless of the size of your order. You could order 40 pounds of protein and still only pay \$5.95 for shipping! (Actually, if you ordered over \$200.00 worth, your shipping would be free!)

[**Return to Extra Topics**](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[**Bonuses**](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Nine Sure-Fire Ways To Gain Fat

When it comes to fat gain, you may be helping your body succeed without even realizing you're doing it! These nine things will open your eyes and stop fat gain in its tracks.

Ever wonder if some of the things you do on a daily basis could be making you gain fat? Some things you may already know but some of them may take you completely by surprise!

1. Eating then sleeping will make you gain fat

Did you know that Sumo wrestlers eat then sleep on purpose to gain fat as quickly as possible? Your body doesn't require as many calories during sleep and calories that are eaten right before sleep have a FAR greater chance of being stored as fat. In fact, it's almost a certainty.

This goes for afternoon naps and also applies to late-night eating. If you eat and then immediately sleep on a regular basis, you will gain fat.

[EDITORS NOTE: eating specific foods such as protein shakes that are taken for the purposes of muscle building and recovery do not fall into this category. When taken properly and in reasonable quantities, they will not add significant fat to the body.]

2. Skipping meals or not eating for long periods of time will make you gain fat

But doesn't skipping meals (most notably breakfast) save a lot of calories during the day? Sure, there's a chance that it may. But consider this - skipping meals will slow your metabolism and you'll get really hungry. With a metabolism that's been slowed by not eating (particularly true of skipping breakfast), you're going to store a lot more of that food as fat. It doesn't matter if you're eating a hamburger and fries or if you're eating plain pasta and a chicken breast. Your metabolism will be sluggish and your body will want to store what you're eating rather than use it.

Eat as soon after you wake up as possible (never more than an hour) to kick-start your metabolism for the day. Even if it's just a small something you grab on the go, do it. It will get your metabolism going and ensure the food you eat later doesn't get preferentially stored as fat.

3. Drinking soft drinks (even diet drinks) with fatty foods will make you gain fat

A sugary soft drink will result in a high insulin response. Insulin is a storage hormone - it helps the body store carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

There is also evidence to suggest that the artificial sweeteners commonly found in diet drinks can cause an insulin reaction in the body. It's a simple reaction to the sweetness, not carbs as there are no carbs in diet drinks. The body simply associates the taste of sweetness with the presence of carbs and assumes that carbs are present, increasing insulin levels in response.

What do you get when you have fatty foods in the presence of increased insulin levels? Simple. You get fat.

My advice is this: if you're going to eat fatty foods (we all do it at some point or other), drink water, not soft drinks or even diet soft drinks. Save the diet drinks for times when you're not eating fatty foods.

4. Constant snacking on energy foods will make you gain fat

I'm all for frequent eating to boost the metabolism and snacking on healthy foods is definitely not a bad thing. That's not what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about giving your body a constant supply of food energy.

Consider this: if you give your body a constant supply of energy, it will not have a reason to dip into stored bodyfat for energy. You'll never dip into the battery on your laptop computer if you leave it plugged in. The body is no different.

A constant supply of outside energy means it won't have to use its own stored energy supplies. The result: you put on fat because the body doesn't need to burn any of it for energy.

5. Stress without physical exertion will make you gain fat

The jury is NOT out on evolution. The human body evolved to deal with stress in certain ways. Before we became "civilized," stress was all about fight-or-flight. Stress was that you were about to be eaten by a lion so you'd better run!

In response, the body needed a mechanism for quick energy to be available and a system to help deal with shock and injury. It was all about survival.

The result? In stressful conditions, the body secretes cortisol - a hormone that immediately starts breaking down muscle tissue for fast energy (it also acts as an anti-inflammatory in case of injury; cortisone is a relative of cortisol).

These days, we very rarely have to worry about being eaten by pretty much anything. But the basic responses of the body can't distinguish between that stress and the stress of, say, your

boss taking away your treasured red stapler that you love so much and moving your desk to the basement.

In the past, stress would be immediately followed by physical exertion. You'd run as fast as you could from the lion or you'd fight off what was attacking you. Now, there is rarely physical exertion following stress so the cortisol is not dissipated. It continues to break down muscle and promote fat storage.

This is why constant stress without regular exercise will make you gain fat.

6. Toxic substances in your food will make you gain fat

Your body's reaction to a toxic substance is simple: protection. There are two primary ways the body does this. First, it tries to flush the toxins out. If that fails, it will try to lock the toxins away.

Think about it this way - what do nuclear power plants do with radioactive waste? They seal it in concrete and bury it. This is essentially the same thing your body does with toxins that you ingest. If it can't get rid of them, it seals them up in fat cells and locks them away.

Have you ever experienced headaches or other general ill feelings when you've gone on a diet? This is typical and is a result of previously stored toxins being released into the body again as you burn or release fat. You are, in essence, unsealing the toxins and flushing them out. This is one of the primary reasons it's critical to drink plenty of water when you're losing fat.

Minimize foods that contain toxins such as preservatives, pesticides (wash your fruit and vegetables thoroughly), antibiotics, and heavy metals (such as the mercury increasingly found in some species of fish). Your body will protect itself by holding onto fat to lock the toxins away.

7. Losing muscle mass will make you gain fat

The engine of your metabolism is your muscle mass. This is where the majority of calories are burned in the body. If you go on a diet and you lose a lot of muscle, it is pretty much a guarantee you'll gain the weight back (and often more!) and make it harder to lose fat again.

If you don't protect your muscle mass, the more you diet, the fatter you'll get.

8. Overconsumption of fructose will make you gain fat

Even though fructose is a sugar found in fruit and fruit juice, please, please, PLEASE don't take this point to mean that simply eating fruit is going to make you fat. It's not. Here's what I mean:

Your body stores carbohydrates in the form of glycogen in the muscles and in the liver. When your body needs energy, it breaks the glycogen down into sugar (glucose) for use in various bodily processes.

When your glycogen stores are full, extra carbohydrates will have a tendency to be stored as fat unless burned by activity. Fructose is more efficiently converted into fat (more specifically, it's converted into the chemical backbone of triglycerides, which are fat molecules) than are other carbohydrates such as glucose. This makes it that much easier for excess fructose to be converted into fat.

While high fructose corn syrup is by far the main culprit when it comes to fructose and fat gain, even the fructose found in fruits and fruit juices can have this effect. Because fructose has "nicer" associations with it (being a fruit sugar) than other sugars such as sucrose (table sugar), a person may think they can drink all the juice they want and not run into the same trouble as if they drank the same amount of a sugary drink containing sucrose.

Fruit juices are essentially a concentrated source of fruit sugar and calories - as much as 150 calories or more per glass! Certainly, juice has more nutritional qualities to it than a soft drink but it is nevertheless important to realize that juice actually has a lot of calories and that the sugar it contains can easily be converted into fat.

What to do about it? Eating your fruit and drinking your fruit juice earlier in the day will greatly minimize any chance of spillover into fat stores. Also, take steps to minimize consumption of high fructose corn syrup, which is found in foods and drinks such as soft drinks and fruit beverages, cookies, gum, jams, jellies and baked goods. As always, read the labels!

9. Drinking alcohol frequently will make you gain fat

Alcohol can make you fat in so many ways. Consider these points:

- Alcohol inhibits both the fat-burning enzymes and the muscle-building hormones in your body for many hours after consumption.
- Alcohol is normally consumed later in the day/evening, a time when your body has the least need for the extra calories.
- Alcohol is preferentially stored as fat and is very efficiently converted into fat in the body.
- Alcohol is not an intelligence-enhancing substance and can lead you to make poor late-night food choices, again, a time when your body needs the extra calories the least.
- Alcohol is a depressant that will eventually make you tired. Remember what Sumo wrestlers do to gain fat quickly? Take in a lot of calories then go directly to sleep.
- Alcohol contains a lot of calories (7 calories per gram) with very little, if any, redeeming nutritional value.

All these points are not to say a moderate amount of alcohol consumption is bad for you. The key truly is moderation.

When you look at these points all together, imagine how quickly you'll gain fat if you drink a lot of alcohol late at night, eat fast food then go directly to sleep. There are few better ways to gain fat this quickly.

Conclusion:

Keeping an eye on the above factors can help you keep your weight under control. Add exercise into the mix and that extra fat will be a thing of the past!

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

[Bonuses](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

How Fat Loss Pills Can Make You Fatter

What the diet industry doesn't want you to know can have serious long-term effects on your health and bodyfat levels.

There are many good supplements on the market today that are extremely effective for fat loss. Fat loss is big business and this has fueled tremendous developments in technology. There are more high-quality fat burning products out there now than ever before.

Properly used, these supplements can make a big difference in your fat loss efforts, helping you reach your goals far quicker.

Improperly used, however, fat burning supplements can actually make you fatter, no matter how effective they are! In fact, the more effective a supplement is, the worse off you could be!!

To be clear, there is absolutely nothing wrong with using supplements to help lose fat. I'm all for it. The main problem with fat loss supplements lies with how people use them (and how they are told and encouraged to use them).

Armed with the knowledge in this article, you will learn exactly what you can do to break the diet pill cycle and keep the fat off for good.

The Big Secret

The diet pill and fat loss drug industry is built on ignorance: not theirs, yours.

Many of these companies bank on that fact that people generally don't know a whole lot about fat loss or supplements. They are in the business of selling shortcuts to you so that you don't have to know anything about fat loss. The reason for this is simple: if people knew a lot about fat loss, they wouldn't need fat loss products anymore and the companies would go out of business.

As backwards as it seems, the diet industry can only stay profitable by keeping people fat.

Look at the typical business. They do their best to keep customers coming back to them. That's how they make money. Why would the diet industry be any different? If you lose fat and maintain

that fat loss you won't need to lose fat anymore. You won't be their customer anymore!

As little business sense as it makes, the ideal situation would be to have companies that are dedicated to the goal of losing customers. If they do their job, you will lose fat and keep it off and never need them again! As a personal trainer, my goal has always been to train people so thoroughly that they don't need me anymore.

Is this sort of reform going to happen in the diet industry? Not likely. But there is something you can do to stop the cycle (you are doing it right now): LEARN!

How Fat Loss Pills Can Make You Fatter

The bottom line is...fat loss pills work. This is both the best thing about them and the worst thing about them.

When you take a good fat burning supplement, you lose a lot of fat, you feel better about yourself and you are happy, right? This is the best thing about fat loss supplements.

The worst thing about these supplements is that because they work so well, you don't have to change your eating or exercise habits to accomplish your goals. You get results simply by taking a little pill.

Does this phrase sound familiar: "Eat whatever you want and still lose weight!"

Here's the scenario: you take the pills and you lose all the weight you want. What happens when you stop taking the supplement once you've reached your goals? Since you haven't had to change your eating or exercise habits, you regain the weight. Then you buy their pills again and start the same cycle again! It is very similar to the yo-yo diet syndrome of weight loss and regain.

How do you break this cycle? The solution is very simple though it may not be glamorous or easy: you learn to eat properly and you exercise regularly.

When you remove your dependence on fat loss pills to lose fat (through education, nutrition and exercise), you free yourself to use them to enhance your efforts, not anchor them. You will be able to lose your extra fat and keep it off without having to depend on fat loss pills to make it happen.

[**Return to Extra Topics**](#)

Upper Abs	Lower Abs
Rotational/Obliques	Total Ab Exercises
Exercise Update #1	Extra Topics

The Best Abdominal Exercises You've Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.

Follow the Path of MOST Resistance! Why weight training is the fast track to sculpting your body.

Resistance is NOT futile! When it comes to changing your body for the better quickly and permanently, nothing comes close to good old-fashioned weight training.

The shape of your body is determined by three things: muscle, bone and fat. While there's really nothing you can do about changing your bone structure, there is a whole lot you can do about muscle and fat. This ratio of muscle to fat is commonly known as your body composition.

And what is the fastest way to change your body composition? Weight training. Why is it so effective? Because it builds muscle.

Muscle is the key to changing your body. While fat certainly gives your body shape, muscle is what gives you the shape you actually WANT!

One of the greatest things about muscle is that it burns calories all day long, even when you're lying on the couch. What this means is that the more muscle you have, the more calories you'll burn during the day and the more you'll be able to eat without gaining weight. Sound interesting? There's more.

Weight training stimulates your metabolism more than aerobic training such as cycling or walking. This means that you'll continue to burn calories long AFTER you've completed your weight training session. The calorie-burning effect of aerobic training generally declines rapidly once you stop the exercise.

Beginning trainers, who are just starting with exercise, are often under the impression that they should stay away from weight training because they might gain weight before they start losing it.

I like to use a car as an analogy. Imagine your body is a car, your muscles are the cylinders in the engine, and your bodyfat is the gas.

With a four-cylinder car, you only burn a minimum amount of gas/fat. Weight training and building more muscle is the equivalent of putting more cylinders into your engine. As you can imagine, you'll burn a whole lot more gas even while idling! And, just like a car with more cylinders, you'll be a lot more powerful too!

The bottom line to you is this...with more muscle, you'll get greater fat loss with less effort.

While it certainly is a possibility that you could gain weight before losing it, if you gauge your success solely by numbers on a scale then you're not getting an accurate picture of yourself. Measure your progress by how you feel, how you look and how well your clothes are fitting, not by which direction the needle on a measuring device is moving.

At the end of the day, I'm not suggesting for a moment that you should eliminate cardiovascular training from your exercise routine, but, if you are struggling to lose fat and keep it off, weight training may be just the thing you need to lose that fat and keep it off for good!

For more information on resistance exercises you can do at home, go to:

<http://www.fitstep.com/Library/Begin/exercises.htm>

For more information on weight training exercises you can do at the gym, including optimized exercise technique, tricks for improving the exercise and common errors, go to:

<http://www.fitstep.com/Library/Exercises/Exercises.htm>

[Return to Extra Topics](#)

Upper Abs	●	Lower Abs	●
Rotational/Obliques	●	Total Ab Exercises	●
Exercise Update #1	●	Extra Topics	●

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of**
BetterU, Inc.

Cable Janda Sit-Ups

All Training Levels



Why Is This Exercise So Effective?

The Janda Sit-Up is an extremely effective way to target the abs without the involvement of the hip flexors. This variation of the Janda allows you to do it without expensive specialized equipment or a spotter.

How To Do It

The Janda Sit-up was invented by Professor Vladimir Janda as a means of decreasing hip flexor involvement and increasing abdominal activation in a sit-up movement. Basically, the idea is to have a partner exert pressure on the back of the calves while you're performing the sit-up. This pressure causes the hamstrings and glutes to activate to work against that tension. When the hamstrings and glutes are activated, the hip flexors are inhibited from activating, taking them out of the movement. This results in the abs doing the

majority of the work.

This is a VERY effective exercise but does require a partner or specialized equipment to perform properly. Until now.

This exact technique can be very effectively duplicated using nothing but a pulley and bar. If you are working out at home, you can also accomplish this with rubber tubing or even a rope or weight belt (I'll explain below).

Set a cambered bar (the one with the bends - this works better than a straight bar) on the low pulley. If you have an adjustable pulley, set up a few notches to get a more direct line of pull on the calves.

Sit on the floor, reach forward and grab the bar. Lay back on the floor, set your legs over the bar and hook it just above your calves. Set your feet flat on the floor, lay back on the floor and then get ready to crunch. You should feel a light to moderate pulling force against the calves, which causes you to contract your hamstrings and glutes.

Using the proper weight is critical to getting this exercise right. If you use too little, your hamstrings and glutes won't be activated enough. If you use too much, the pull on the legs will change the focus of the exercise, taking tension off the abs and forcing you to think too much about trying to hold the weight in place. The ideal weight is fairly moderate that will allow you to set your feet on the ground and contract your hamstrings without having to fight against the weight while you're coming up.



Now you're ready to sit up. Start the exercise by performing a crunch movement. At the top of the crunch, continue coming up into a full sit-up position. Coming up in the crunch first ensures that your abs are contracted and ready to take up the full stress of the movement. I've found this to decrease any potential lower back stress as well, which is possible if you come straight up from a flat-lying position.

You should get a VERY strong contraction in your abs as you come to the top of the sit-up, without much, if any, tension or strain in the hip flexors. Lower slowly then repeat.



Common Errors

1. Using too much or too little weight

As explained above, if you use too much weight, you'll be forced to concentrate on keeping the weight in place and you will lose tension in the abs. If you use too little weight, you won't use enough hamstring and glute activation and you won't get enough back-pulling force to workout against when doing the sit-up.

2. Improper bar placement on the calves

If you place the bar below the belly of your calf muscles, the bar won't be secure and you won't get the best tension on the hamstrings and glutes. It's tougher to keep the bar in place as well.

Tricks

1. Using rubber tubing or another anchoring method

This technique can also be performed by wrapping rubber tubing around a solid object then around behind your calves. If your tubing is an unbroken band, place the whole thing on the other side of the solid object then pull the two ends around it. Set your feet inside the two loops that form as a result of this placement. Move yourself back a little to get some stretch tension on the band then perform as directed above.

Using a lifting or dip belt is also possible, though it doesn't provide the same degree of backwards pulling tension to activate the glutes and hamstrings. Loop the belt around a solid object, set your lower legs inside the belt then slide the belt up behind your calves. Exert tension in your hams and glutes as you do the sit-up.

2. Doing negatives by changing arm position

If you're looking for a way to really fire up your abs, try arm-position negatives. Come up in the sit-up with your arms held at your sides. This makes the exercise easier. Hold at the top then raise your arms overhead. Lower down slowly. This increases the resistance and increases the tension on the abs!

3. Weighted Janda negatives

Use a dumbbell for this. Hold it forward on the way up and then behind your head on the way down.

4. Bench-End Janda Sit-Ups

Set a bench lengthwise in front of the cable set-up. Sit on the bench and hook yourself up leg you normally would for this exercise. Set your butt back on the bench so that when you come down, your upper back can curl over the end of the bench. This puts a stretch on the abs and gives you a greater range of motion and stronger contraction.

[Abdominal Sit-Ups](#) • [Bench End Cable Crunches](#) • [2 Ball Static Holds](#) • [Combat Crunches](#) • [Curl Squats](#) • [Cable Janda Sit-Ups](#)
[Double Cable Pull Crunches](#) • [Leg Press Crunches](#) • [Ball Arm Scissors](#) • [Ball Pullover Crunch Supports](#) • [Bar and Ball Roll-Ins](#)
[Cable Push Crunches](#) • [Wall Walker Sissy Squats](#) • [See-Saw Cable Crunches](#) • [Small Ball Crunches](#)
[The "Ab Ripper"](#) • [Reverse Leg Raises](#) • [Lean Back Cable Supports](#)

Upper Abs		Lower Abs	
Rotational/Obliques		Total Ab Exercises	
Exercise Update #1		Extra Topics	

**The Best Abdominal
Exercises You've
Never Heard Of
BetterU, Inc.**

Terms & Conditions

PLEASE READ THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS BEFORE USING THIS EBOOK.

Privacy Policy

At BetterU, Inc. , your privacy is important to us. All personal information will be held in the strictest confidence. Your name or e-mail address will not be sold to any bulk mailing lists. You may choose to opt out of the BetterU, Inc. e-mail newsletter at any time by requesting to do so via e-mail.

BetterU, Inc. collects personally identifiable information when you buy training programs from BetterU, Inc. including: name, email and other optional information from which your identity may be reasonably ascertained. The personal information collected from Clients during the registration process is used to manage each Client's account (i.e. setup of services).

BetterU, Inc. also automatically receives and records information on our server logs from your browser including, but not limited to, your IP address, page that you requested, and your browser type.

ALL personal information is held in the strictest confidence and will not be sold or distributed without express consent by you.

Definition of Services

FITSTEP.COM, a Web site (sometimes hereafter the "Site") owned and operated by BetterU, Inc. (hereafter a.k.a. "FITSTEP.COM"), provides Internet-based fitness and health information and personal training services to the fitness consumer. This e-book is a product of BetterU, Inc. and FITSTEP.COM.

Acceptance of Terms of Use

You must agree to these Terms of Use in order to use this e-book. By using this e-book., you acknowledge your agreement to these Terms of Use. Please read these Terms carefully. If you do not agree to all of the Terms of Use in this agreement, please do not use this e-book..

FITSTEP.COM may revise and update these Terms of Use at anytime. Please review the Terms of Use periodically as posted at the FITSTEP.COM Site because your continued usage of this e-book. will mean

you accept those changes. Please check these areas before using this e-book. to determine whether a change has been made to these Terms of Use. If you do not agree to these changes in the Terms of Use as they may occur, please terminate your use of this e-book. immediately (1) by notifying FITSTEP.COM of your unwillingness to accept the changes to the Terms of Use; and/or (2) by deleting the file from your computer.

Occasionally, FITSTEP.COM may supplement these Terms of Use with additional terms pertaining to specific content or events, ("Additional Terms"), which Additional Terms may be placed on FITSTEP.COM to be viewed in connection with the specific content or events and shall be identified as such. You understand and agree that such Additional Terms are hereby incorporated by reference into these Terms of Use.

SECTION ONE:

Disclaimer of Warranties and Consequential Damages

Neither BetterU, Inc. nor FITSTEP.COM recommends or endorses any specific test, products, or procedures that may be mentioned in this e-book.. FITSTEP.COM does not assume any liability for the contents of any material provided in this e-book.. Reliance on any information provided by FITSTEP.COM, its Personal Trainers, or other readers of this e-book is solely at your own risk. FITSTEP.COM assumes no liability or responsibility for damage or injury to persons or property arising from any use of any product, information, idea, or instruction contained in the materials provided to you. FITSTEP.COM reserves the right to change or discontinue at any time any aspect or feature of this e-book.

FITSTEP.COM, its licensors, and its suppliers make no representation or warranties about the accuracy, reliability, completeness, currency or timeliness of the content, software, text, graphics, links, or communication provided on or through the use of the FITSTEP.COM Site, this e-book or other BetterU, Inc. information. FITSTEP.COM, its licensors, and its suppliers do not make any warranty that the content contained on the FITSTEP.COM Site or in this e-book satisfies government regulations requiring disclosure of information on supplements and/or prescription drug products.

You acknowledge that in connection with this e-book, information will be transmitted over local exchange, inter-exchange and Internet backbone carrier lines and through routers, switches and other devices owned, maintained and serviced by third party local exchange and long distance carriers, utilities, Internet service providers and others, all of which are beyond the control of FITSTEP.COM and its suppliers. Accordingly, FITSTEP.COM assumes no liability for correlating to the delay, failure, interruption or corruption of any data or other information transmitted in connection with use of this e-book.

YOU EXPRESSLY AGREE THAT USE OF THIS E-BOOK IS AT YOUR SOLE RISK. THIS E-BOOK IS PROVIDED ON AN "AS IS" AND "AS AVAILABLE" BASIS. FITSTEP.COM EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION ANY WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, NON-INFRINGEMENT OR COURSE OF DEALINGS OR COURSE OF PERFORMANCE. SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT ALLOW DISCLAIMER OF THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES, AND TO THAT EXTENT ONLY, THE ABOVE EXCLUSION MAY NOT APPLY TO YOU.

BETTERU, INC. MAKES NO WARRANTY THAT FITSTEP.COM WILL MEET YOUR REQUIREMENTS, OR THAT FITSTEP.COM WILL BE UNINTERRUPTED, TIMELY, SECURE, OR ERROR FREE. BETTERU, INC. DOES NOT GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF ANY INFORMATION IN OR PROVIDED IN CONNECTION WITH FITSTEP.COM. FITSTEP.COM IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS IN OR FOR THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE USE OF SUCH INFORMATION. THE INFORMATION IS PROVIDED WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT NEITHER FITSTEP.COM NOR ITS MEMBERS, WHILE SUCH MEMBERS ARE PARTICIPATING IN FITSTEP.COM, ARE ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, MEDICAL, COUNSELING OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OR ADVICE. BETTERU, INC. ENCOURAGES YOU TO SEEK APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL ADVICE OR CARE FOR ANY SITUATION OR PROBLEM WHICH YOU MAY HAVE.

NEITHER BETTERU, INC. NOR FITSTEP.COM SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE CAUSED, OR ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN CAUSED, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, BY THE INFORMATION OR IDEAS CONTAINED, SUGGESTED OR REFERENCED IN THIS E-BOOK. YOUR PARTICIPATION IN FITSTEP.COM IS SOLELY AT THE YOUR OWN RISK. NO ADVICE OR INFORMATION, WHETHER ORAL OR WRITTEN, OBTAINED BY YOU FROM FITSTEP.COM SHALL CREATE ANY WARRANTY NOT EXPRESSLY MADE HEREIN.

FITSTEP.COM MAKES NO WARRANTY REGARDING ANY GOODS OR SERVICES PURCHASED OR OBTAINED THROUGH FITSTEP.COM OR ANY TRANSACTIONS ENTERED INTO THROUGH FITSTEP.COM.

Links to Other Web Sites

This e-book contains links with other web sites on the Internet that are owned and operated by third party merchants, organizations, advertisers and other third parties. This e-book may also contain advertisements and promotional material of such vendors, advertisers and other third parties. Some or all of the web sites listed as links herein are not under the control of FITSTEP.COM, but rather are exclusively controlled by third parties. Accordingly, FITSTEP.COM makes no representation or warranty as to the content, statements, representations, warranties or other information contained in such links, such other web sites or such advertisements or promotional materials, and it makes no representation or warranty as to the creditworthiness or reputation of any such third party whatsoever concerning such web sites.

Moreover, while FITSTEP.COM may provide a link to a third party, such a link is not an authorization, endorsement or sponsorship by FITSTEP.COM with respect to such web site, its owners or its providers. FITSTEP.COM has no actual knowledge of any illegal, fraudulent, defamatory, slanderous or obscene matters or activities relating to, or being effected through, or in connection with such links, other web sites, advertisements or promotional material FITSTEP.COM has not tested any information, products or software found on such web sites and cannot make any representation whatsoever with respect thereto, nor is it FITSTEP.COM's obligation to perform an independent investigation of any such web sites. The content of, and the statements and opinions expressed by and through, those web sites linked to this e-book do not necessarily reflect the values, statements and opinions of FITSTEP.COM and its electronic connection to such third parties or their electronic connection to FITSTEP.COM does not constitute, and should not be construed as, its endorsement or support of such content, statements or opinions.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility to take precautions to ensure that whatever you select is free of such items as viruses, worms, Trojan horses and other items of a destructive nature.

IN NO EVENT WILL BETTERU, INC. OR FITSTEP.COM BE LIABLE TO ANY PARTY FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, SPECIAL OR OTHER CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, ON ANY LEGAL THEORY OF LIABILITY, ARISING FROM OR IN CONNECTION WITH ANY USE OF THIS E-BOOK, OR ANY OTHER HYPERLINKED WEB SITE, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, ANY LOST PROFITS, BUSINESS INTERRUPTION, LOSS OF PROGRAMS OR OTHER DAMAGE TO YOUR INFORMATION HANDLING SYSTEM OR OTHERWISE, EVEN IF FITSTEP.COM IS EXPRESSLY ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES.

No Medical Advice

This e-book is designed primarily as a fitness educational resource and is provided for informational purposes only. The content is not intended in any way to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Neither the content nor any other service offered by or through this e-book is intended to be relied upon for medical diagnosis or treatment. Never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this e-book.

This e-book should not be considered inclusive of all proper treatments, procedures and tests or exclusive of other treatments, procedures and tests that are reasonably directed towards obtaining successful weight management or health or fitness.

SECTION TWO:

Privacy

FITSTEP.COM reserves the right to perform statistical analyses and profiling of member and other user behavior and characteristics in order to measure interest in and use of the various areas of the Site and to inform advertisers of such information. FITSTEP.COM will provide only aggregate data from these analyses to third parties; no personally identifiable information will be disclosed.

Under no circumstances should this e-book or any of the fax numbers or mailing addresses on this e-book be used to send FITSTEP.COM confidential or proprietary information. Data which is not personal, including questions, comments, ideas and suggestions, shall be deemed to be non-confidential and FITSTEP.COM shall be free to disclose and use the same for any purpose, and through any means, without any obligation whatsoever to you. FITSTEP.COM specifically prohibits the use of this e-book for the purpose of violating laws, engaging in business disparagement or defamation, or discriminating or harassing any person.

Despite the foregoing, in any event subscribers and visitors should be aware that when you voluntarily disclose personally identifiable information (for example, user name, e-mail address) on the bulletin boards or chat areas of FITSTEP.COM, that information, along with any substantive information disclosed in the subscriber's or user's communication, can be collected and correlated and used by third parties and may result in unsolicited messages from third parties. Such activities are beyond the control of FITSTEP.COM. FITSTEP.COM makes no warranties about the discoverability of members' identity by methods beyond our control.

Children and Minors

FITSTEP.COM does not knowingly operate a "web site or online service directed to children" as defined in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (15 U.S.C. § 6501 et seq.).

SECTION THREE:

Use of Content

Upon acceptance of these Terms of Use, FITSTEP.COM authorizes you to view or download a single copy of the material in this e-book solely for your personal, noncommercial use (the "Content"). The further copying, redistribution or publication of any part of this e-book is prohibited unless done with all links and copyright notices intact. Special rules may apply to the use of certain software and other items provided on the Site. Any such special rules are listed as "Legal Notices" The legal notices and are incorporated into these Terms of Use by reference.

You may not sell or modify the Content or reproduce, display, publicly perform, distribute or otherwise use the Content in any way for any public or commercial purpose. The use of the content on any other Web site or in a networked computer environment for any purpose is prohibited. Content is subject to change without notice at the editorial discretion of FITSTEP.COM. If you violate any of these Terms of Use, your permission to use the Content automatically terminates and you must immediately destroy any copies you have made of any portion of the Content. For information obtained from FITSTEP.COM's licensors, you are solely responsible for compliance with any copyright, trademark and other proprietary rights and restrictions and are referred to the publication data appearing in bibliographic citations, as well as to the notices appearing in the original publications.

Intellectual Property Rights Reserved

All information provided by FITSTEP.COM in any form, is proprietary to FITSTEP.COM and is protected by U.S. and foreign laws and international treaties governing intellectual property. All such information published by FITSTEP.COM or presented by its employees, agents or consultants is copyright protected. Since a copyright notice is no longer required by law, the omission of the copyright notice by FITSTEP.COM does not invalidate copyright protection, and it does not indicate that BetterU, Inc, authorizes the reproduction of such proprietary material.

None of the Content may be reverse-engineered, disassembled, decompiled, reproduced, transcribed, stored in a retrieval system, translated into any language or computer language, retransmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photo reproduction, recordation or otherwise), resold or redistributed without the prior written consent of FITSTEP.COM, except that you may reproduce limited excerpts of the data for personal use only, provided that each such copy contains a copyright notice as follows: Copyright © 2006 BetterU, Inc. All rights reserved.

No License

Except to the extent expressly provided for elsewhere in this Section Three, this e-book does not confer and shall not be considered as conferring upon anyone any license under any of BetterU, Inc, or FITSTEP.COM's or any third party's intellectual property rights.

Miscellaneous

In the event that any provision of the Terms of Use conflicts with the law under which the Terms of Use are to be construed or if any such provisions are held invalid by a court with jurisdiction over the parties to the Terms of Use, such provision will be deemed to be restated to reflect as nearly as possible the original intentions of the parties in accordance with applicable law, and the remainder of these Terms of Use will remain in full force and effect.

The failure of either party to insist upon or enforce strict performance by the other party of any provision of the Terms of Use or to exercise any right under the Terms of Use will not be construed as a waiver or relinquishment to any extent of such party's right to assert or rely upon any such provision or right in that or any other instance, rather, the same will be and remain in full force and effect. No waiver of any of these Terms of Use shall be deemed a further or continuing waiver of such term or condition or any other term or condition.

FITSTEP.COM may assign its rights and obligations under these Terms of Use and upon such assignment FITSTEP.COM may be relieved of any further obligation hereunder.

You represent to BetterU, Inc. that you have the authority to register with FITSTEP.COM according to these Terms of Use.

Indemnity

You agree to defend, indemnify and hold BetterU, Inc. and FITSTEP.COM, its officers, directors, employees, agents, licensors and suppliers, harmless from and against any claims, actions or demands, liabilities and settlements including without limitation, reasonable legal and accounting fees, resulting from, or alleged to result from, your use of the content (including software), or the Interactive Areas in a manner that violates or is alleged to violate these Terms of Use. BetterU, Inc. shall provide notice to you promptly of any such claim, suit, or proceeding and shall reasonably cooperate with you, at your expense, in your defense of any such claim, suit or proceeding.

Jurisdiction and Choice of Law

FITSTEP.COM is based in Illinois, in the United States of America. FITSTEP.COM makes no warranties that the content is appropriate or may be downloaded outside of the United States. Access to the Content (including software) may not be legal by certain persons or in certain countries. If you access the Site from outside the United States, you do so at your own risk and are responsible for compliance with the laws of your jurisdiction. These Terms of Use shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois, without giving effect to its conflict of laws provisions.

You expressly agree that exclusive jurisdiction for any dispute with FITSTEP.COM, including any claim involving FITSTEP.COM or its affiliates, subsidiaries, employees, contractors, officers, directors, telecommunication providers and content providers, or in any way relating to your membership or use of FITSTEP.COM, resides in the courts of the State of Illinois. You further agree and expressly consent to the exercise of personal jurisdiction of the applicable court and that venue shall be in a court sitting in Lake County, Illinois.

Remedies for your Breach of these Terms of Service

In the event that FITSTEP.COM determines, at its sole discretion, that you have breached any portion of these Terms of Service, or have otherwise demonstrated conduct inappropriate for the on-line community of FITSTEP.COM and its members, FITSTEP.COM reserves the right to (i) warn you via e-mail that you have violated these Terms of Use; (ii) delete any content provided by you or your agent(s) to FITSTEP.COM, (iii) delete all content provided by you to FITSTEP.COM, (iv) discontinue your registration with FITSTEP.COM and/or any other FITSTEP.COM community; (v) notify and/or send content to and/or fully cooperate with the proper law enforcement authorities for further action; and/or (vi) any other action which FITSTEP.COM deems to be appropriate.

Termination.

BetterU, Inc. reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to immediately, without notice to suspend or terminate (i) these Terms of Use; (ii) your registration with or ability to access FITSTEP.COM and/or any other service provided to you by FITSTEP.COM including any e-mail account upon any breach by you of the Terms of Use.

Complete Agreement

These Terms of Use and any Additional Terms (as such terms shall be identified when posted on FITSTEP.COM by BetterU, Inc.) constitute the entire understanding between the parties as to subject matter hereof, and supersede all prior agreements and understandings. Any legally unenforceable provision of these Terms of Use will, at the election of FITSTEP.COM, be deleted or modified to correct the defect and, regardless, the remainder of the terms of these Terms of Use will remain valid and enforceable.

WAIVER

In consideration of the opportunity to participate and/or engage in the use of the above mentioned Program provided by BetterU, Inc., I, for myself and my heirs, assigns, executors and administrators, agree that BetterU, Inc. And its officers, directors, assistants, agents and representatives, shall not be liable, jointly or severally, for any injuries to my person or property. It is expressly agreed that the use of the Program shall be undertaken by the User at his/her sole risk. It is further agreed that BetterU, Inc. shall not be liable for any injuries or damage to the User, nor be subject to any claim, demand, injury or damages whatsoever. I also agree to indemnify and hold harmless BetterU, Inc. And its officers, directors, assistants, agents and representatives against any and all actions, claims, demands, liability, loss, damage and expense of any kind, including attorney's fees, arising from such claims. I am aware and familiar with the ordinary and hazardous risk involved in the activities stated above, and I understand that I am assuming those risks. I am voluntarily participating in these activities and I hereby agree to expressly assume and accept any and all risks of injury or death.

I declare myself to be physically sound and suffering from no condition, impairment, disease, infirmity or other illness that would prevent my participation or use of equipment or machinery during the use of the above stated Program. I acknowledge that I have either had a physical examination and been given my physician's permission to participate, or that I have decided to participate in the activity without the approval of my physician and do hereby assume all responsibility for my participation and activities, including utilization of equipment and machinery. Any information obtained by BetterU, Inc. will be treated as privileged and confidential and will not be released or revealed to any person other than the Buyer's physician without expressed written consent of the Buyer.

Thank you for your cooperation with these Terms and Conditions.

[Back to the previous page.](#)

Copyright 2006 BetterU, Inc. ©

Bonuses

[Contact Us](#)