

Seated Knee Up

When you've fried your abs and feel the need for a couple more sets, finish up with this six-pack-building crunch.

*Kathleen Engel
Robert Reiff*

Start



Sit crosswise, glutes slightly off the bench, hands gripping it just outside your hips. Lean back and raise your legs off the floor, knees slightly bent, to start.

Execution



After leaning your torso forward while bringing knees toward the chest, exhale toward the top of the movement. Crunch your abs at the top, then slowly return to the start position.

Medicine Ball Pass

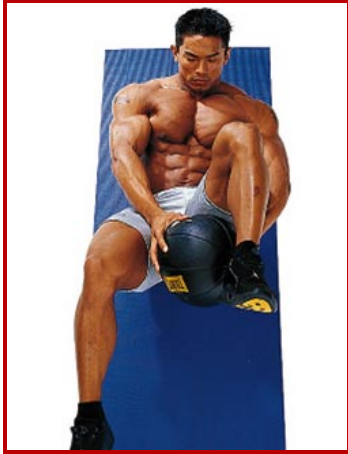
Add this ab blaster to your current routine to shake things up!

Start

Hold a medicine ball in your left hand at chest level as you lie on the floor, knees bent.



Execution



Simultaneously lift your shoulders off the floor, lift your left leg up, extend your left hand and pass the ball under your left leg to your right hand. Once it's in your right hand, lower your torso and left leg. Next, lift your right leg as you raise your upper body and pass the ball under your right leg to your left hand. Alternate sides. Keep both feet off the floor for the set.

Oblique Cable Crunch

Throw in a twist to carve up your obliques!

Jim Stoppani, PhD

Start



- Grasp a rope handle attached to a high cable pulley and kneel about 2 feet from the weight stack.
- Turn your body about 45 degrees to the left so that you're at an angle to the cable apparatus.
- Position your hands down on top of your head and keep your arms locked in this position throughout the exercise. Your knees should be bent at close to a 90-degree angle, and your hips should create an angle just beyond 90 degrees between your torso and thighs.

Execution



- Inhale and hold your breath as you pull down against the resistance, flexing and twisting your spine by contracting your abdominals and obliques. Attempt to bring your right elbow to your left knee.
- Hold this position for a second as you forcefully exhale and contract your abs and obliques.
- Slowly return to the start position, resisting the weight with your abs and obliques.
- Pause for a moment, then inhale and repeat for repetitions.

Hanging Knee Raise

Target your lower abs with this advanced movement

Start



Grasp a high bar so that your body hangs freely without your feet touching the floor. Hang with your arms fully extended and a slight arch in your lower back.

Movement



Bend your legs and raise your knees towards your chest. For this exercise to be effective, your knees should come up above your hips. Return to the start position.

V-up

Balance is the secret ingredient in this exercise that makes it an ultimate ab-flattener.

Start



Lie on the floor, legs straight and arms close by your sides. Bring your shoulder blades a few inches off the floor while simultaneously bringing your feet to the same height.

Movement



Crunch your upper body up, reaching to touch your toes, while raising your legs at the same time.

Swiss-Ball Reverse Crunch

By using a Swiss Ball, you will target your lower abs better and get a ripped midsection

Start



Place a Swiss ball in front of a power rack or Smith machine. Lie on top of the ball, placing your feet on the floor. Grasp a secured barbell behind your head for support and anchor your body. Lift your feet off the floor until they are even with your glutes.

Movement



Slowly raise your knees toward your chest till your hips reach a little more than a 90-degree angle. Contract your abs for a peak contraction, then slowly lower your knees to return to start.

Swiss-Ball Crunch

This scientifically-proven variation of the basic crunch will work your midsection more effectively.

Start



Sit on top of an exercise ball, feet placed firmly on the floor. Slide forward, rolling the bottom half of your glutes off the ball, until your lower back is centered atop of the ball. Place your hands at the sides of your head.

Movement



Crunch your upper body forward, rolling your shoulders toward your hips. Squeeze your abs at the top of the movement, lower and repeat

1. Bicycle Maneuver

- Lie on your back
- Place your
- Push your lower
- Bring your
- through a bicycle pedal
- Touch your left
- left knee.
- Breath evenly throughout the exercise.



with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. fingers on the side of your head just behind your ears. back into the floor flattening the arch and hold. knees up to about a 45-degree angle and slowly go motion. elbow to your right knee, then your right elbow to your

2. Captain's Chair

- This exercise requires gym
- Start with legs dangling and
- The motion should be
- return them back to the starting



equipment. slowly lift your knees in toward your chest. controlled and deliberate as you bring your knees up and position.

3. Crunch on an Exercise Ball

- Sit on the exercise ball with your feet flat on the floor.
- Let the ball roll back slowly and lie back until your thighs and torso are parallel with the floor.
- Contract your abdominals raising your torso to no more than 45 degrees.
- To work the oblique muscles, make the exercise less stable by moving your feet closer together.

4. Basic Crunch

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Place your fingertips to the side of your head just behind your ears.
- Push your lower back into the floor flattening the arch and hold.
- Curl up slowly so both your shoulders lift off the floor a few inches.
- Hold for a count of 2 and return to the start position.
- Tip: Don't clasp your fingers behind your head. Don't tuck your chin to your chest, keep your head up.

5. Half Curl

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Place your palms on your thighs and curl up until your fingertips reach your knees as you breathe out.
- Return to the start position.
- Tip: Don't tuck your chin to your chest, keep your head up.

6. Vertical Leg Crunch

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Place your fingertips to the side of your head just behind your ears. [il] Push your lower back into the floor flattening the arch and hold.
- Extend your legs straight up in the air, crossed at the ankles with slight bend in the knee.
- Contract your abdominal muscles by lifting your torso toward your knees.
- Make sure to keep your chin off your chest with each contraction.
- Exhale as you contract upward; inhale as you return to the starting



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7. Reverse Crunch

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Place your fingertips to the side of your head just behind your ears.
- Crossing your feet at the ankles, lift your feet off the ground to point where your knees create a 90-degree angle.
- Push your lower back into the floor flattening the arch and hold.
- Your hips will slightly rotate and your legs will reach towards the ceiling with each contraction.
- Exhale as you contract; inhale as you return to the starting position



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8. Alternating 'Supermans'

- Lie face down on a mat with your arms stretched above your head (like superman)
- Raise your right arm and left leg about 5-6 inches off the ground (or as far as you comfortably can).
- Hold for 3 seconds and relax.
- Repeat with the opposite arm and leg.

9. Plank

- Lie face down on a mat with your elbows right next to your chest, palms facing down.
- Push off the floor, raising up onto toes and elbows flat, back flat angling up from toes to shoulders.
- Hold abdominals tight, and keep your spine
- Tilt your pelvis and contract your abdominals to rear end from sticking up in the air.
- Hold for 30 to 60 seconds, and then lower; repeat.



with palms

neutral.

prevent your

10. Crossover crunches

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Cross your right leg over your left leg so your right ankle is resting on your left knee.
- Place your fingertips to the side of your head just behind your ears.
- Begin a crunch, but twist your torso and touch your left elbow to your right knee.
- Return to the starting position and repeat for the desired number of repetitions before switching over to the other side.

11. Side Bends

- Holding a dumbbell in your right hand, stand with feet shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent.
- Place your left hand behind your head and slowly bend sideways to your right lowering the dumbbell down to your knee.
- Return to an upright position and repeat for the desired number of reps.

12. Medicine Ball Sit Ups

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Hold a medicine ball (choose a 5 pound ball to begin) to your chest and have a partner stand at your feet (not on them).
- Push your lower back into the floor flattening the arch and hold.
- As you curl up throw the ball to your partner. Hold the crunch as your partner catches the ball and throws it back to you.
- Catch the ball and slowly return to the start position.
- Tip: Don't sit right the way up as you wait for the return pass. Your shoulders should be no more than 6 inches off the floor.

13. Oblique Crunches

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Slowly drop your legs to the left and let your knees rest near the floor.
- Place your fingertips to the side of your head just behind your ears.
- Push your lower back into the floor flattening the arch and hold.
- Curl up slowly so both your shoulders lift off the floor a few inches.
- Hold for a count of 2 and return to the start position.
- Repeat for the desired number of reps and switch to the other side.

14. Seated Oblique Twists with Medicine Ball

- Sit on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Hold a medicine ball with both hands directly out in front of you, twist to your right and place the ball on the ground behind you.
- Quickly, but smoothly, turn to your left to retrieve the ball and repeat for the desired number of reps.
- Repeat the process for the left side.
- Tip: if you have a training partner, sit back to back and pass the medicine ball to each other.

15. Weighted Curls with Medicine Ball or Weight Plate

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Hold a medicine ball or weight plate to your chest (start with 5 pounds).
- Push your lower back into the floor flattening the arch and hold.
- Curl up just enough to lift both your shoulders off the floor a few inches.
- Hold for a count of 2 and return to the start position.

16. Cable Crunches

- This exercise requires a triceps pushdown machine with a rope attachment.
- Kneel down in front of the machine holding the rope just above your head.
- Slowly crunch down to your right knee and hold for 2 seconds as you breathe out.
- Return to the start position slowly and repeat to the left knee.

17. Weighted Oblique Crunches

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Hold a medicine ball or weight plate to your chest, (5 pounds to start).
- Slowly drop your legs to the left and let your knees rest near the floor.
- Place your fingertips to the side of your head just behind your ears.
- Push your lower back into the floor flattening the arch and hold.
- Curl up slowly so both your shoulders lift off the floor a few inches.
- Hold for a count of 2 and return to the start position.
- Repeat for the desired number of reps and switch to the other side.

Push Up Variations

- **Incline (Table Top) Push Ups**
If a standard push up is too difficult, you can start by doing push ups against a wall, a table or a sturdy chair. Stand several feet away from the object you are using and use the same push up technique as above to lower yourself until the elbows are 90 degrees and then raise back up. Keep your core tight the whole time.
- **Bent Knee Push Ups**
This is a modified version of the standard push up performed on the knees rather than on the toes. Be

sure to keep the knees, hips and shoulders all in a straight line; most people have a tendency to bend at the hips as though you are bowing, but this is incorrect technique.

- **Decline Push Ups**
This is a more difficult push up, performed with the feet raised up on a box or bench. You can adjust the box height to increase or decrease the resistance using just your body weight.
- **Clapping Push Up**
This is a plyometric exercise in which you push yourself up with enough power so that your hands come off the floor and you clap in midair. This exercise is not for novice exercisers. You can get injured very easily if you haven't worked up to these one at a time.
- **Medicine Ball Push Up**
Perform a standard push up with one hand on top of a medicine ball. This works the shoulder in a slightly different range of motion which increases shoulder stability.
- **Diamond Push Up**
The diamond push up is done with your hands close together; with the index fingers and thumbs of one hand touching the other hand and making a diamond shape. You then do push ups with your hands touching the center of your chest and elbows close to your sides during each rep.