



THE ULTIMATE ABS TRAINING TIPS

Not seeing the results you want? Martin Sutcliffe, one of London's toughest PTs, reveals the surefire techniques to supercharge your six-pack



Men'sHealth®
Active+

HOW CAN YOU ACTIVATE YOUR CORE MUSCLES MORE DURING EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES?

Effective core activation comes from [the connection between your mind and muscles](#). Focus on contracting your transversus abdominis (the deepest layer of abdominal muscle) as you make a cup of tea, climb an escalator or simply wait for the bus.

WHAT TECHNIQUES DO YOU USE TO INCREASE THE INTENSITY OF ABS EXERCISES?

Add progressions to exercises as they start to feel too comfortable. [Just try working an additional 'phase' into the movement](#). Our plank and press-up core workout (*right*) is a good place to start.



DO YOU HAVE ANY PREDICTIONS FOR THE CORE TRAINING TRENDS OF THE FUTURE?

Bodyweight workouts are still growing in popularity. They're [so effective](#).

WHAT IS THE ABS EXERCISE YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING?

Hanging leg raises.



WHAT ONE EXERCISE DO YOU ALWAYS INCLUDE IN YOUR ABS WORKOUTS?

Plank variations. Simply holding the plank for longer or adding modifications is a [convenient way of checking in with your core strength](#). Plus, the horizontal brace position develops the isometric tension you need in order to get more from full-body functional moves and sport-specific exercises.



CAN YOU GIVE US AN EXAMPLE OF A CORE CIRCUIT YOU INCORPORATE IN YOUR OWN PERSONAL WORKOUTS?

Try each of [the following moves for two minutes](#) before progressing to the next exercise:

- Plank with shoulder taps
- Plank walk
- Plank twists
- Plank reaches

WHAT IS YOUR GO-TO PRE-WORKOUT FUEL AND POST-WORKOUT RECOVERY SNACK FOR BUILDING LEAN, STRONG ABS?

I down a double espresso before workouts because caffeine (without the added calories of milk and sugar) is a [great performance booster](#). After a workout, I try to get all my nutrition from food – my staple is grilled chicken with sweet potato and greens.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISTAKE YOU SEE CLIENTS MAKING, AND THE BEST WAY TO CORRECT IT?

Poor posture during training, [particularly a rounded back and shoulders](#). This prevents you from extending your abs and strengthening them through their full range of movement. Frequently checking in with your posture and opening through the shoulders will help you get better results from the same exercises.