

Best Core Exercises

1 Plank Lie on your stomach. Raise yourself up so that you're resting on your forearms and your knees. Align your head and neck with your back, and place your shoulders directly above your elbows. Tighten your abdominal muscles. Hold for 15-30 seconds and repeat 2-3x times.



2 SIDE Plank Lie on your left side, raising yourself onto your left forearm. Place your left shoulder directly above your left elbow, keeping your shoulders, hips and knees in alignment. Rest your right arm along the side of your body. Tighten your abdominal muscles. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Repeat on your right side. For added challenge, balance on your left hand. Raise your hips off the floor and extend your right hand toward the ceiling. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Repeat on your right side.



3 DEAD BUG Lie face up with your knees bent at 90 degrees. Tighten your abs as you lift your right leg up (still bent at 90 degrees) and reach your right arm to your knee. Quickly switch your arms and legs, raising your left arm overhead toward your left knee, and lowering your right arm and right leg. That's one rep. Exhale every time you switch sides, keeping your abs braced in tight the entire time. Do 2 sets of 10 reps.



4 REVERSE CURL Lie flat on your back with both hands beside your hips, legs extended out with your heels lifted about six inches off the floor, toes pointed. Contract your abs, bend and draw your knees into your chest, and raise your hips slightly off the floor. Slowly lower back to the start position. Do 3 sets of 8.



5 CRUNCHES ON BALL Sit on the edge of the ball. Roll out until lower back is resting comfortably on ball. Place feet flat on floor, shoulder-width apart. Position hands behind head, elbows pointing directly out to sides. Raise head even with torso and gaze straight up. Exhale and slowly curl torso forward, flexing abs to raise chest up and toward pelvis. Do not force or pull head forward. Hold for 3 breaths. Release slowly. Repeat 10-12 times.



6 BICYCLE CRUNCH Lie face up with knees bent and lift both feet until lower legs are parallel with the ground. With fingertips positioned behind ears and elbows wide, lift both shoulder blades off the ground. Exhale as you angle left shoulder toward right knee, keeping left shoulder aligned with left inner thigh as left leg extends. Inhale back to center and exhale to repeat the movement in the opposite direction. Do 12-15 reps on each side.



Cameron, M. (2014). How to do ab crunches on a balance ball for 40% better results. Retrieved from <http://life.gaiam.com/>
Mayo Clinic. (2015). Exercises to improve your core strength. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/>
Shape. (2013). The best ab exercises you've never seen before. Retrieved from <http://www.shape.com/>