

## A SIX PACK AND MORE

by Allen Taber

Did you know that the abdominals are made up of different muscle groups? They are the rectus abdominis, which runs vertically and is called the “six-pack” when contracted, the transverse abdominis, which runs horizontally, and a pair of muscles called the obliques, which run diagonally down the sides. Regular crunches will work the two former muscles and build up the front of your stomach, but you need to work your obliques as well. Toned, strong obliques hold in your sides and give you a sleek waistline.

When doing any ab exercises, always remember to lift both the upper body weight (crunches with the feet kept on the floor) and the lower body weight (bringing your knees into the stomach as you raise the hips off the floor). The ab muscles can pull in two directions, unlike a lot of the other muscles in the body.

Using your own body weight is the best, in my opinion, but adding light weight to any ab exercise is fine, too. And don't forget the back, since the whole core needs to work together to keep you upright and stable.

Here is my ab routine which works all the ab muscles and gets progressively harder as you go through the eight moves.

Do each exercise 10 times or less to start:

While lying on your back with your legs bent and feet flat on floor, slide hands to knees, bringing shoulders up off the floor. Keep the lower back pressed against the floor.

With the entire back in contact with the floor and your legs bent and your feet flat on the floor about 6 inches from your seat, do alternating heel hits with each hand.

Hold your feet off the floor with your legs bent 90 degrees and reach around your legs touching your fingers behind your thighs. Keep the lower back pressed against the floor.

With one foot on the floor, cross one leg over the other. Touch the bent knee with the opposite elbow. Switch legs. Do the other leg and arm the same number of times.

Hold both legs straight up and reach around your legs touching your fingers behind your thighs. Keep the lower back pressed against the floor.

Lay with your legs straight out on the floor and both arms straight out over your head. Alternate bringing the right arm and the left leg together and the left leg and the right arm together. Try to keep the other arm and leg on the floor during the process. Keep the lower back pressed against the floor.

While lying on your back, hold both legs straight up and together. Hold both arms straight out over the head. As you open your legs wide, lift your outstretched arms and shoulders up and reach through your legs. Return to the starting position with the arms on the floor and the legs closed. Keep the lower back pressed against the floor.

Do a lying down bicycle move keeping your lower back on the floor and touching the opposite knee and elbow together, while keeping the outstretched leg off the floor about 6 inches and the non-touching elbow in contact with the floor.