

Anabolic Drive Series: The Rectus Abdominis, External Oblique, Internal Oblique, and Transverse Abdominis



ABC Featured [Sean Calder](#)

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Extensive pictures of the models displayed in this entry can be found by clicking [HERE](#)

Abstract

Using the skeleton framework, the following workouts will be adhered to for maximal results of the programs design.

Introduction

Workout A, Part one:

1. Lying Knee Lift supersetted with elbow/toe plank (10 sets):

Lying Knee Lift:

- Lying on the ground, assume the Dead Bug static position and maintain that contraction throughout this entire set.
- Lift one knee as high as possible without compromising the dead bug position, and then lower it without tightening hips, or allowing the rest of the body to move at all. Feet should not rest back on the ground once the set begins. As

you are bringing your knee back down simultaneously lift the other knee, alternating back and forth in this manner. It is critical to not let your hips open, or your head to slide on the floor.

Advanced: Lift both legs up, and lower one at a time from there, back must never arch, you should only feel this in your abs.

Immediately upon failure, perform a 10 to 20 second elbow and toe plank.

Execution of Toe and Elbow Plank:



- a. Lie face down on mat resting on the forearms, palms flat on the floor.
- b. Push off the floor, raising up onto toes and resting on the elbows.
- c. Keep your back flat, in a straight line from head to heels.
- d. Tilt your pelvis and contract your abdominals to prevent your rear end from sticking up in the air.
- e. Hold for 10 to 20 seconds.
- f. Rest for 10 seconds, and repeat ten to twenty times.
- g. This can also be done with elbows resting on an exercise ball for increased intensity.

2. Swiss Ball [Crunches](#), (optional weight), feet close together 5 sets

The Stability ball enhances proprioception. Proprioception is an awareness of where one's hand, or foot, is in relationship to space.

The constant flux of the exercise ball provides the body with continuous opportunities to evaluate its orientation in space. This will develop and train the body's natural responsiveness. Enhanced proprioception supplies the body with improved balance and stability.



Utilizing the Swiss Ball, perform five sets of crunches keeping the feet close together throughout the set.

1. Lie face-up with the ball resting under your mid/lower back.
2. Cross your arms over the chest or place them behind your head.
3. Contract your abs to lift your torso off the ball, pulling the bottom of your ribcage

down toward your hips.

4. As you curl up, keep the ball stable and keeping your hips up during the concentric (lifting) portion of the movement.
5. Keep the Lower back down to produce a stretch in the abs.

Advanced: The lesser the amount of the mid/lower back is resting on the Exercise ball the more difficult the movement will become (your hips should always stay on the ball). It is recommended to "draw in" allowing more of the torso to find stabilization on the Swiss ball as failure sets in to keep intensity high and take the set beyond what would normally be possible. Advanced bodybuilders can use weight by using a low cable station and a rope attachment.



Sit on the stability ball facing away from a low pulley. Roll back away from low pulley column so your back is on the ball. Reach back and grasp the cable rope attachment with both hands and place the inside of your wrists on sides of your head. Allow the weight to hyperextend the lower back against stability ball.

3. [Twisting Hanging Leg Raises](#) with Wrist Wraps 5 sets

The author recommends wrist wraps to keep body momentum at a minimum. This will ensure the obliques are being incorporated into the movement.

As the bodybuilder raises his or her legs, the abdominals must stay in constant contraction.

To make this movement more advanced, keep the legs extended straight out.

Workout A, Part two:

The following exercises are to be carried out throughout the duration of a thigh routine. Between each set of thigh exercises the listed movements will be performed in an alternating manner. For example: 1 set Wide-grip pull-ups, staggered with

[Bent Knee Flat Bench Leg Raises](#), 1 set Wide-grip pull-ups, staggered with [Lying Knee Lift](#). Alternating in this manner throughout the entire back routine.

1. [Bent Knee Flat Bench Leg Raises](#) Lower Abdominal crunch, staggered sets

Pull the knees up toward the chest in a slow and controlled manner by contracting the lower abdominals. Return slowly to the starting position. Focus on pulling with the lower abs. Limit the range of movement to minimize hip flexor involvement. More advanced athletes can use a bench placed at an angle to increase resistance.

2. Lying Knee Lift (see example above), staggered sets

Maintain the static "dead bug" state throughout each set of part two.

Workout A, Part three:

The following exercise is to be carried out throughout the duration of a back routine. Between each set of back exercises the listed movement will be performed.

1. Bent Knee Side Raises, staggered sets

Lie sideways on the floor or a flat or decline bench with knees bent and arms holding onto either the end of the bench.

Slowly bring the knees toward the chest. Switch to the other side and repeat. Keep the movement short to remove the hip flexors from the motion. Work both sides.

Workout A, Part four:

1. Twisting Crunches, 5 sets for each side, 10 total sets. At the end of each set, hold the last rep statically until failure.

Workout B, Part One:

1. Hyperextension Machine Side Crunches, 5 sets for each side, 10 total sets

Position the side of your thigh firmly against the pad of a hyperextension machine.

Lower your torso by bending at the waist. Raise your torso by lateral flexing at your waist. Do five sets for each side. Use caution at first and go slowly, to ensure you do not strain your obliques.

2. [Lying Scissor Kicks](#) on an Incline board in dead bug position, 5-10 sets.

Sit on an incline board and adjust the board according to your fitness level. The more the board is angled the harder this exercise will become. Assume the dead bug position on the board. Raise your legs up as high as you can without compromising

the static dead bug state. You must maintain the dead bug formation tightly throughout this exercise.

Next, you will lower one leg, only a few inches, then raise it back to the starting position. Repeat with the opposite leg. Continue in this kicking manner to failure, keeping the dead bug form tight as you do so.

3. [Cable Crunches](#), 5-10 sets, supersetted with elbow/toe plank (See example above).

Cable crunches require intense focus. I liken the intensity they demand to the force of bicep concentration curls. Without total focus, momentum and arm strength will do all the work, which is why you tend to see people racking the entire weight stack on this exercise and can still straighten themselves up after a set. Perform a set of cable crunches to failure.

Next, superset the cable crunch with the elbow/toe plank as described above. As you continue doing this plank exercise throughout this series aim for longer and longer times under tension. You may also incorporate rest-pause sets as well. This static exercise is extremely effective for carving out definition between the muscles of the rectus abdominis (See: [Static Contraction](#)).

Workout B, Part Two:

The following exercises are to be carried out throughout the duration of a thigh routine. Between each set of thigh exercises the listed movements will be performed in an alternating manner.

1. Hyperextension Machine Side Crunches (See above example)
2. [Bent Over Twists](#)

Workout B, Part Three:

1. [Seated Leg Tucks](#), staggered sets

The following exercise is to be carried out throughout the duration of a back routine. Between each set of back exercises the listed movement will be performed.

Lie on a flat or decline bench (depending on your fitness level), with your legs straight and hanging slightly over the end.

Use your hips to lift your legs until your toes are right above your navel. Keep your legs straight as you lift them.

At the top of the range of motion your legs should be perpendicular to your body, forming a 45° angle.

Raise your hips off the bench several inches, keeping your legs perpendicular to your body.

Your hips should be lifted by pushing up with the lower abs. Your feet should move straight up as you lift. Again this requires focus to keep the tension on the targeted area.

Workout B, Part Four:

1. [One and a Half Crunches](#) supersetted with Side Plank or Side Bridge, 10 sets total.

As you crunch, do not lift your whole back off the floor, just roll forward and crunch your rib cage toward your pelvis. To execute this movement, crunch to the top of the range of motion, descend back down half way through the range of motion, and then perform a partial rep; lower completely and repeat.



Superset the crunches with the side plank. To assume the static state, plank with your right arm straight and your left arm on your side. Alternate sides after each set of crunches. Again this can be done on a swiss ball for added intensity.

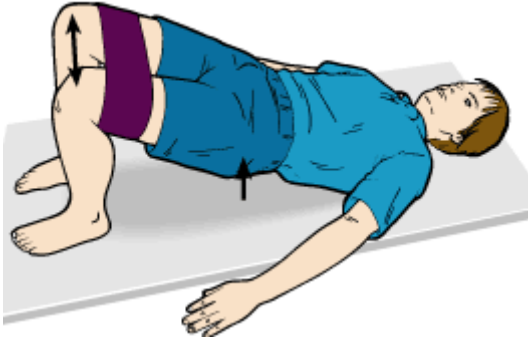
Workout C, Part One:

1. Bridge with Knee Lift, 10 sets

Begin this movement in the bridge position. For some holding this position will be enough for exercise one of workout C. If you cannot hold the bridge position statically for 30 seconds, doing any dynamic work while maintaining a static bridge will be too advanced. Simply do the bridge without the knee lift until significant core strength is developed.

To execute the bridge,

- Align feet under knees close to hips.
- Drive hips up until you have a straight line from your knees to shoulders.
- Keep weight on shoulders & off neck
- Draw navel into spine then brace core
- Keep a straight line posture as you hold the bridge



In the above picture a thera-band is used to increase intensity. If you wish to do the bridge alone without the knee lift, the thera-band, like the stability ball, is one way to increase static strength with the intent of improving hypertrophic technique in other exercises.

If you are advanced you will perform a bridge, then begin alternating knee lifts. Remember, form must be perfect to keep tension on the abs.

In the bridge position, raise one knee as high as comfortably possible and then bring it back down so you are again in the bridge position. Next raise the opposite knee in the same manner. Repeat until failure. Upon failure of the knee lifts, maintain the static bridge, contracting the abdominals for 30-60 second.

2. [Vertical Bench Crunches](#), 10 sets

Position your body on the padded parallel bars with your hands firmly grasping the handles. Keep your back flat on the vertical pad, as though you were attempting to do a vertical dead bug. Support your bodyweight on your forearms.

Raise your legs by flexing you hips while flexing your knees. Raise your legs until hips are fully flexed.

Lower your legs until your waist, hips, and knees are extended.

If you chose to utilize weight clench a dumbbell between your ankles.

3. Pullover Crunch, 5-10 sets

- Rest your middle and upper back firmly against an exercise ball, holding a cable on pulley with a neutral grip.
- As you crunch keep your arms extended keeping the shoulders locked. Keep your arms in line with the trunk on the first part of the crunch.
- As you finish the crunch bring your hands towards you knees.
- Slowly return to the starting position.

Go lighter at first to get the proper feel of the movement.

Workout C, Part Two:

The following exercises are to be carried out throughout the duration of a thigh routine. Between each set of thigh exercises the listed movements will be performed in an alternating manner.

1. Dead Bug Partial Crunches-

These are similar to regular crunches except that you raise your shoulder up, instead of pulling them toward your pelvis. You will also maintain the dead bug state throughout the set. You can do these at a rapid pace; in fact it's hard to do them any other way.

Workout C, Part Three:

1. Dumbbell or Cable Side Bend, 5 sets on each side



Stand with your side to a low pulley and grasp the cable with the arm on the non-working side. Stand with your arm straight.

Bend your waist to the opposite side of the cable. Lower and repeat. Then turn around and continue with the opposite side.

Workout C, Part Four:

1. Weighted Crunches, 10 sets.

Assume the crunch position. Hold a dumbbell in each hand.

Changing the hand position can increase the difficulty of this exercise.

The closer to the hips you hold the weights the easier the exercise will become. To amplify the difficulty, hold the weight closer to your head or add more weight.

Continuous Gains:

Repeat Workouts A, B, and C for one complete mass and leaning out. The length of which is relative to each bodybuilder.

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