

BODY
BLITZ
week 02

absolutely fabulous

abs

Did you know
you're better off doing
10 perfect crunches
than hundreds of dodgy
ones? Here's how.

By **Linda Drummond.**



Okay, let's face it, we all feel so much better with a nice flat tummy and trim waist. So to get your body beach-ready we've put together a workout to give you a tum to rival Anastacia's or Matthew McConaghey's in no time.

Let's start with the basics. There's no point in having the six pack from heaven if it's hidden under a layer of excess padding. If you're hanging on to a few extra kilos look at reducing your kilojoule intake, upping your water intake and following a varied cardio program along with doing these ab exercises. The following target all major muscle groups in your abdominals.

Exercise physiologist Kim Allsopp from Step Bite Step in Shellharbour near Wollongong says that to get perfect abs the most important thing is technique. You're better off doing 10 correct crunches than 500 poorly performed sit ups – bad form means you're not working your abs, you're using your back, leg and neck muscles to pull yourself up instead. The key to good form is to keep the movements small and controlled – don't go any higher than a 45 degree angle from the floor and concentrate on using your abdominals to perform the exercise.

And you don't need to follow Britney Spear's example by finding the time to do 2000 crunches a day, you can see results by doing much less. "For the average person, 40 ab exercises a day is plenty," says Allsop.

If you do these exercises a few times a week, along with some cardio to build your aerobic fitness and burn off kilojoules, results will appear. "As little as 20 minutes of moderate exercise most days is better than 45 minutes of high intensity two to three times a week for burning off kilojoules and boosting fitness," says Allsop.

1

fitball crunch

Sit on a fitball with your feet flat on the floor. Let the ball roll back slowly and lie back on it until your thighs and torso are parallel to the floor. Contract your abdominals and raise your torso no more than 45 degrees. Lower and repeat 10 times.

■ **pump it up** To work the obliques, move your feet closer together.

cardio pump

To maximise fat burning and muscle building you need to work out regularly. For the next seven days follow this program:

■ **day one** Morning: 45 minute walk.
Evening: abdominal exercises

■ **day two** 30 minute swim: alternate the laps with freestyle, backstroke, and breaststroke and finish up with freestyle. Alternatively try out an aquafitness class or a circuit class at the gym.

■ **day three** Pilates or yoga class or workout at home with a video.

■ **day four** Abdominal workout.

■ **day five** Stair climbing: find a walk nearby with stairs. Walk for 15 minutes to warm up, then run up and down the stairs, followed by a brisk walk.

■ **day six** Rest.

■ **day seven** Cardio workout (bike riding, treadmill, running or walking) and abdominal workout.

2 the bicycle

Lie flat on the floor with your lower back pressed into the ground. Put your hands beside your head (don't lock your fingers behind your head) and bring your knees up to a 45 degree angle. Slowly go through a pedalling motion, as if you're riding a bike. Touch your left elbow to your right knee then your right elbow to your left knee. Breathe evenly throughout. Perform 10 sets on each side.

■ **pump it up** Use light wrist and ankle weights to give your workout an extra boost.



3 the plank

Lie down on the floor, face down, then position yourself as though you're doing a push-up – arms supporting your body, resting on your toes with your body in a long, lean line. Pull in your abdominals by contracting through your navel (as though you're trying to bring your navel to your spine). Hold for a count of five, relax, then repeat.

■ **pump it up** Slowly lift your left leg to hip height, pull in your abs and hold for five. Lower your leg then alternate with your right leg for 20 reps each side.





4 twist crunches

Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and your hands beside your head. Let your legs fall as far as they can to the left side so your upper body is flat on the floor and your lower body is on its side.

Press your lower back down into the floor while you roll your upper body slightly up until your shoulder blades are clear from the floor. Concentrate on crunching your obliques (the muscles on the side of your waist) and contract and hold the crunch for one count.

Slowly lower to the floor, rest for a beat and perform 10 more reps. Then do the same on the other side.



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5 vertical leg crunch

Lie on the floor and raise your legs straight in the air until they're at a right angle to your torso (or alternatively, lie with your thighs up and your calves resting on a chair). Place your hands alongside your body, palms down, and slowly bring your body up so your shoulder blades are off the ground. Hold for one beat, then slowly lower your body to just above the ground. Perform 10 moves.