

The Advanced

How to Do It: Pick any three or four exercises from this list and perform in a circuit with no more than 30 seconds rest (1 minute in some cases) -- one ab workout followed by the next. Rest, then repeat the circuit. Abdominal masochists like Matthew McConaughey can do all six in the circuit, then repeat.

1 Swiss Ball Crunch/Knee



Sit on top of the Swiss ball with your legs in front of you, feet flat on the floor, and hands behind your head. Keeping your feet flat on the floor, slowly lean back along the ball until your head, shoulders, and back are lying comfortably along its surface. Slowly curl and lift your shoulders and upper back up from the ball as you simultaneously draw your left knee toward your chest. Lower your left foot back down as you lower your torso down to the ball. Repeat the motion, this time raising your right knee up toward your chest as you crunch up. Keep the ball still. Lower yourself back down and repeat the exercise, alternating between your left leg and your right.

12–16 repetitions

2 V-Raise



Lie faceup on the floor with your hips and knees bent at 90-degree angles and your arms at your sides, palms facing in. Slowly extend your legs out and up so they are above the floor at a 45-degree angle. As you extend your legs, simultaneously raise your upper body off the floor so that your torso is held at a 45-degree angle (you should look like the letter V) and extend your arms straight out in front of you until they are parallel to the floor. Your hands should rest on the outside of your legs. Hold this position, then lower both your upper and lower body down to the floor.

12–16 repetitions

3 Hanging Reverse Trunk



Hang from a chinup bar with your hands shoulder-width apart and legs straight but bent forward at a 30-degree angle. Keeping your legs held at that angle, raise them up in front of you until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Next, tense your abs, tilt your pelvis, and slowly raise your legs up until your feet are almost as high as your head. From the side, your body will be in a V position. Don't use momentum to swing your legs up; that will engage your hip flexors, not your abdominals. Slowly lower your legs back down to the middle position, keeping your thighs parallel to the floor. Holding that posture, slowly rotate your legs to the right (as if you were pointing between 1 and 2 o'clock with your feet), then rotate your legs to the left (as if you were pointing between 10 and 11). Bring your legs back to center, slowly lower them back down, and repeat the entire cycle.

4 repetitions

4 Twisting Medicine Ball



Lie faceup on the floor with your hands resting next to your chest. Keep your knees bent and feet flat. Have a partner stand a few feet in front of you and to your right. Curl and lift up so that your torso is almost perpendicular to the floor and extend your arms out in front of your chest. Now, have your partner toss the ball across your body to your left side. Catch the ball with both hands and slowly twist your body to your left, lowering your torso as you go. Touch the ball to the floor as your partner moves to your left. Curl yourself up and toss the ball back to your partner. Repeat the exercise, with your partner throwing the ball across your body to your right. Catch the ball, twist to the right as you lower yourself down, and touch the ball to the floor. Continue the exercise, alternating from side to side.

12–16 repetitions

6 V-Raise Knee Tuck



Lie faceup on the floor with your hips and knees bent at 90-degree angles and your arms at your sides, palms facing in. Slowly extend your legs out and up until they are straight and 45 degrees above the floor. Simultaneously curl your shoulders and lower back off the floor, extending your hands toward the outsides of your feet so that your arms are straight out in front of you. Holding this position, slowly draw your right knee toward your chest, then extend your right leg back out. (Your left leg should remain stable throughout the movement.) Exhale as you draw your knee in and inhale as you extend your leg out. Repeat the same knee-to-chest motion with your left leg. Continue to alternate from right to left throughout the exercise.

12–16 repetitions

5 Single-Resistance Double Crunch



Place a mat in front of a low-pulley cable with a bar attached to it. Sit facing the pulley with your knees bent. Place the bar between your feet, then draw your legs together so that the chain becomes locked between your feet and the bar rests across the tops of your feet. Lean back on the mat with your head and back flat on the floor and bend your knees to a 90-degree angle (thighs perpendicular to the floor). Place your hands lightly along the sides of your head, elbows out to the sides. Holding your knees at a 90-degree angle, slowly curl your head and shoulders off the floor as you tilt your pelvis and curl your legs toward your chest. Don't draw your knees into your chest. Hold this position for 1 second, then return to the starting position (back flat on the floor with your knees bent at a 90-degree angle).

12–16 repetitions