



Best Abdominal Exercises

Okay, you've seen all the infomercials for the abdominal machines and ab exercises. Which ones are the best and which ones are junk?

A recent study conducted by the Biomechanics Lab at San Diego State University identified the top three abdominal exercises.

After extensive data collection and analysis, researchers found that exercises that require constant abdominal stabilization, as well as body rotation, generated the most muscle activity.

The most effective exercise was found to be the Bicycle. The second ranked exercise was the Captain's Chair (or Roman Chair). The third highest rated ab exercise was the crunch performed while on an exercise ball.

As far as all those ab machines – save your money. According to the study the Torso Track appeared to be marginally more effective than the traditional crunch. However, a lot of subjects in the study reported lower-back discomfort while using the Torso Track. The Ab Roller was proven to be virtually no more effective than the traditional crunch while the AB Rocker was shown to be up to 80 percent less effective.

For best results, the study recommends choosing several of the exercises that landed in the top-third of the list and try doing a five-minute exercise session daily.

How to do the Top Abdominal Exercises Correctly

Bicycle Maneuver: Lie flat on the floor with your lower back pressed to the ground. Put your hands beside your head. Bring knees up to about 45-degree angle and slowly go through a bicycle pedal motion. Touch your left elbow to your right knee, then your right elbow to your left



knee. Keep even relaxed breathing throughout.



Captain's Chair: Stabilize your upper body by gripping the handholds and lightly pressing your lower back against the back pad. The starting position begins with you holding your body up and legs dangling below. Now slowly lift your knees in toward your chest. The motion should be

controlled and deliberate as you bring the knees up and return them back to the starting position.

Crunch on Exercise Ball: Sit on the ball with your feet flat on the floor. Let the ball roll back slowly. Now lie back on the ball until your thighs and torso are parallel with the floor. Place hands behind your head (or cross your arms over your chest) and slightly tuck your chin in toward your chest. Contract your abdominals raising your torso to no more than 45 degrees. For better balance, spread your feet wider apart. To challenge the obliques, make the exercise less stable by moving your feet closer together. Exhale as you contract; inhale as you return to the starting position.



Source: www.acefitness.org/getfit/abstudy_top.cfm