

Exercises for the Abs (Rectus Abdominis)

Ab Crunch Machine

Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

This is like a sit-up or crunch, but the machine helps you to add resistance for greater strength increases. Place your forearms around the armrest, with your back firmly against the padding. You should have the chair set high enough that your legs dangle straight down when you are in position. Place your feet either flat on the footrest or loop them behind the footrest. Then slowly bring your chest toward your knees, keeping your back straight, and hold for a few seconds before extending them to the beginning position.



Air Bike

Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

Lie on your back and put your hands behind your head. Raise your legs so your thighs are perpendicular and your lower legs are just above parallel to the floor. Curl up and bring your left elbow toward your right side while drawing your right knee in to meet it. Alternate sides, continuing the motion back and forth. Rotate your shoulder across and squeeze your abs.



Bent-Knee Hip Raise

Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

This is like a reverse crunch but with a longer range of motion. Outstretch your hands to your sides with your knees bent at a 60° angle and your feet just off the floor. Using your lower abs, roll your pelvis backward to raise your hips off of the floor, bringing your knees over your chest. Squeeze your abs and then return to the starting position slowly. Repeat.

**Leg Raises**

Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

Position yourself on the leg raise station. Support your body weight on your forearms. Keep your torso upright. Raise your legs in a semicircular arc until your legs are parallel to the floor. Then slowly lower legs back to the starting position. Repeat.



Cable Crunch

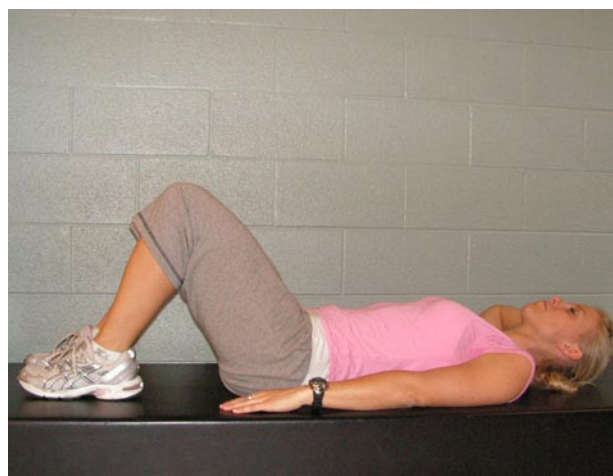
Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

Kneel below a high pulley. Grasp cable rope attachment and place wrists against the head. Flex hips slightly and allow the weight to hyperextend the lower back. With the hips stationary, flex the waist so the elbows travel toward the middle of the thighs. Return and repeat.

**Cross-Body Crunch**

Major Muscle Group: Rectus Abdominus

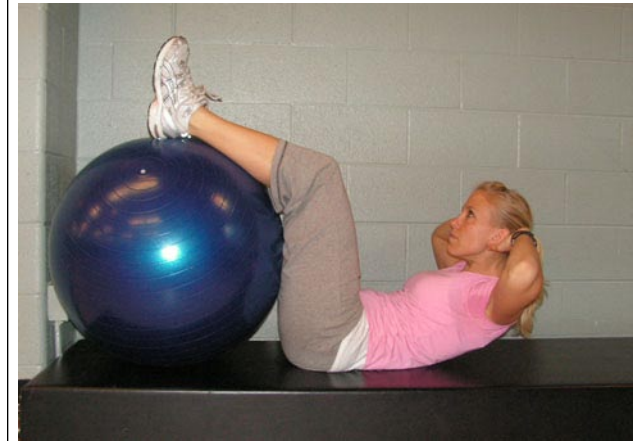
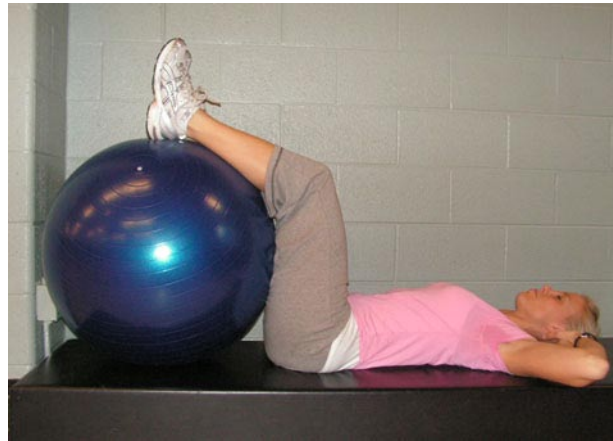
Lie on your back and bend your knees about 60° and keep your feet flat on the floor. Place your hands loosely behind your head. Curl up and bring your right elbow and shoulder across your body while bringing your left knee in toward your left shoulder at the same time. Reach with your elbow and try to touch your knee. Try to bring your shoulder up toward your knee rather than just your elbow. Repeat side to side.



Crunch — Legs on Exercise Ball

Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

Lie flat on your back with your feet resting on an exercise ball, with your knees bent at a 90° angle. Place your feet 8–10 cm (3–4 in) apart and point your toes inward so that they touch. Place your hands across your chest. Push the small of your back down in the floor to isolate your ab muscles. Begin to roll your shoulders off the floor. Your shoulders should come up off the floor only about 10 cm (4 in), and your lower back should remain on the floor. Return to lying flat on the floor. Repeat.

**Incline Reverse Crunch**

Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

Lie on your back on an incline bench and hold on to the top of the bench with both hands. Hold your legs parallel to the floor using your abs to hold them there. Keep your knees and feet together. Slowly bend your knees and bring your pelvis up and in toward your chest. Slowly lower your pelvis to the starting position, keeping constant tension on the abs. Don't arch your back inward while your legs are in the starting position. Repeat.



Abdominal Ball Crunch

Major Muscle Group: Rectus abdominus

Sit on top of an exercise ball with your feet placed firmly on the floor. Roll the bottom half of your glutes off the ball by sliding forward. Your lower back should be centred on top of the ball. Place your hands on the sides of your head, but do not use your hands to pull. Crunch your upper body forward and roll your shoulders toward your hips. Then lower back to the starting position and repeat.

