

Abs - Old Way New Twist

By
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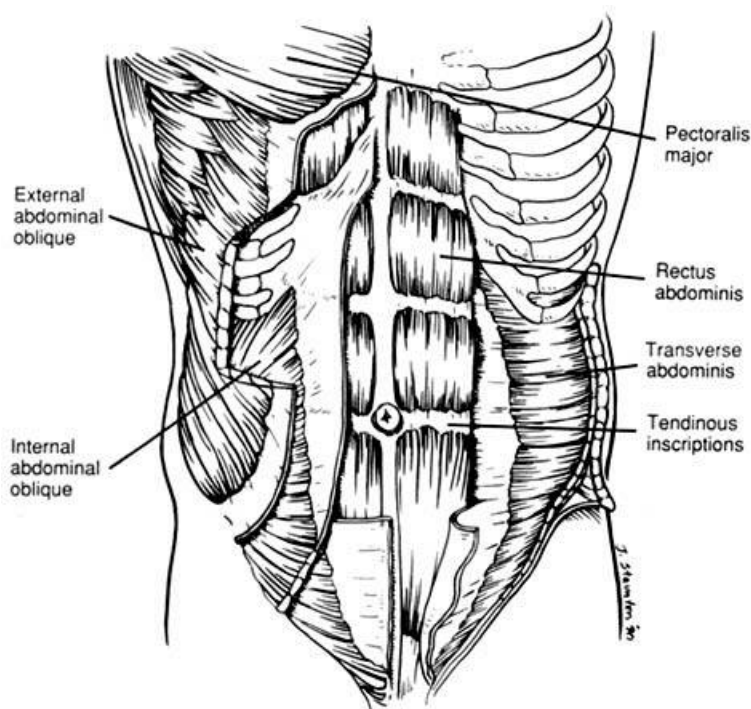
Sit-ups and stiff knee leg raises have finally been recognized as poor movements for working the abdominals. Crunches and bent knee leg raises have become the main stay. Still, they are despised by almost everyone who uses them but I don't know of a single bodybuilder who doesn't have them in their workout.

As Baby Boomers are becoming more and more health conscious the amount of mail I receive regarding training tips is shifting from hardcore bodybuilding to general conditioning and overall health. I remain a hardcore iron man but I also understand and know the confusion and problems those who do not embrace the traditional training we bodybuilders follow. Another point is bodybuilder or not, the abs are a problem area for almost everyone, men as well as women, bodybuilders or people seeking to improve their overall health. It makes no difference.

Many movements are available for working the abs but for some reason people seem to only recognize and perform two. Crunches and bent knee leg raises sometimes referred to as reverse crunches. Why I don't know because there are about as many different exercises for the waist as there are for the arms. Walk into any gym however, and you'll see people working abs doing crunches and bent knee leg raises.

I've written articles and courses directed to abdominal training and slimming the waist. Each provided accurate and result producing information.

The biggest problem is most people won't stay with it or any program long enough to obtain the results they are capable of. The "core" or abdominal region consists of more than a single muscle. The region is comprised of various muscles and need to be trained from a various angles with different movements in order for the best results to be achieved.



Here's a method that worked extremely well for me when I was trying to shape up my waist and found crunches and other movements we bodybuilders perform simply was not getting the job done. I had hit a sticking point. We all talk about sticking points for our arms, chest, back, and legs but usually fail to mention the sticking points associated with our abs. The abdominals are muscles just like the biceps and triceps. Why shouldn't they succumb to sticking points just as well? I believe they not only should... I believe they do and they are subject to sticking points just as every muscle is.

I discovered no matter how I altered my ab workout, no matter how many different standard movements I would employ, I hit a sticking point from time to

time or was obtaining fewer results than I wanted. For years my approach was to do just what I often did for any body part that had hit a sticking point. I would discontinue training the muscles for a week or two so they could rest. Then upon my return to exercising them, they would immediately respond to the stimulus and results would once again be realized. That is until I started to include Ab Vacuums into my workouts. These neat little different movements provide something new and fresh to ab training. They also provide exceptional results.

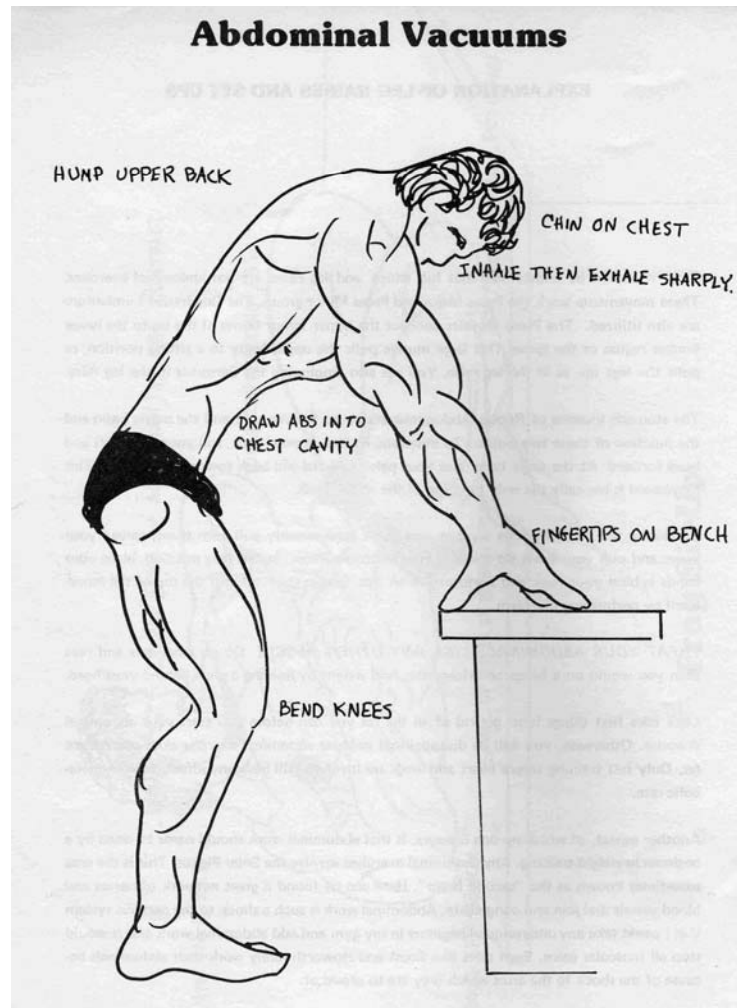
I had some problems with them at the start and I admit they were a source for some frustration. However, once I had the movement down I quickly found an entirely new appreciation for working my abs. In fact, Ab Vacuums became the foundation for my ab workouts.

The technique is not as simple as it first appears nor is it as difficult as it feels while performing them for the first few times. Like anything else it takes practice and patience. I found only a few reps could be performed in the beginning. As I worked the movement I discovered that technique was of great importance. Concentration is important and so is breath control.

Having performed the movement in almost every position you can think of, I favor the standing version, over a table. I feel I have more control and receive better results in this position. I have also found the Ab Vacuum somewhat addictive. At one point in time, if I was at a stop light I can assure you I was performing Ab Vacuums waiting for the light to change.

I would begin by standing over a table. Feet slightly less than shoulder width apart, knees bent. Place the finger tips of the hands on the table and bend over slightly. Take in a deep breath and let it all go out. With no air in your lungs or abdomen, suck your stomach in trying to touch your belly button to your spine. Now contract all your ab muscles as hard as you can while keeping your stomach pulled in as far as possible and hold that contraction for a slow count of

three. Gradually work up to holding the contracted position for a longer period of time. Relax and repeat. Perform 2 x 10.



This is the Standing Ab Vacuum as illustrated in Vince Gironda's Abdominal Course.

Another version of the Ab Vacuum can be done while standing and placing the hands behind your head. Just as an extra added bonus, if your job requires sitting or if you travel a lot, you can perform an Ab Vacuum while sitting behind your desk or behind the wheel of your car. You can perform them in almost any position, kneeling, standing, sitting, lying on your back – stomach – side, the variables or unlimited.



Frank Zane inserting a Standing Ab Vacuum in one of his posing routines.

Now, the routine does not consist of only Ab Vacuums. Although they will provide strength to your core and will firm your waist, you must also include various other ab movements in order to obtain satisfactory results. I found performing Ab Vacuums first and then proceeding to do my crunches, reverse crunches or whatever other ab movements I had scheduled produced the fastest and most dramatic results.

Although almost everyone by now knows that you cannot spot reduce and exercise alone will not reduce the waist. It seems this point needs to be reinforced quite often so here we go. You cannot spot reduce only one section of the body. Exercise alone, without a proper diet will not produce any significant physical change. Results are obtained only when a complete exercise program and sound diet are followed... there, once again it's been said.

Best results for me came from performing Ab Vacuums in various positions at the start of my ab workouts. I would then proceed to crunches, reverse crunches, hanging leg raises and other movements; changing each workout as I felt the need or like. I got my ab work in at the beginning of my

workouts, it helps act as a warm up. The number of days I worked abs would also vary greatly. Sometimes I would hit them twice a week, sometime three, and sometimes everyday.

If you feel your present ab workout is not giving you the results you expect, try some Ab Vacuums. Good Luck.

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