

You probably will notice right away that I didn't provide the number of reps and sets you should do for each exercise, or even which group of exercises you should do. This is because I want you to figure out what works best for your specific needs.

My suggestions...

- 1) Do as many reps as you can do while still maintaining proper form. When the burn gets so bad that feel you cannot possibly go on, do one or two more. This is what will help you build muscle. For a majority of these exercises, if you can complete 20-25 reps without feeling a burn, you need to make the exercise more intense. One way to do this with core exercises is to hold positions longer or, sometimes, add leg weights.
- 2) I have tried to put the exercises in an order that makes sense and is easy to follow. I pick an exercise or two for each muscle group in my legs, and follow that routine for 2 weeks. At that point, I make a new routine, using some of the moves I already used, as well as some new ones. This will help prevent your muscles from getting used to doing any one exercise. The reason you want to prevent that from happening is it can slow down how quickly you see improvements and gains.
- 3) While I judge how many reps to do by the "burn" level, I do set a time limit. For example, I started out by picking 7 exercises. I decided I would work out for 10 minutes. If that meant I only did one set of each exercise, great. If I didn't get all the way through each of the 7 exercises, oh well! You need to know how long your body can tolerate exercising, and only push it a little. You don't want to push yourself too much and end up unable to exercise for a few days from overdoing it. This was hard for me at first because conventional exercise advice always tells us to push ourselves even when our bodies are tired. Well folks, our bodies are anything but "normal" so don't overdo it!
- 4) Keep track of how many reps and sets you are doing as well as if you are adding weight or not. If one exercise seems really difficult to complete or causes a symptom, note it! I use a heart rate monitor, so I note my starting heart rate. When I am done, my heart rate monitor tells me my maximum and average heart rate during the workout. I record this as well. You will have a very hard time noticing changes in your ability if you don't keep track! When you are chronically ill, something as small as 2 extra reps, or 1 extra minute several days in a row can be a sign of major progress! I have included pre-made charts under the "exercises" tab, so no excuses. ☺

*These exercises are not intended to be taken as medical advice. Consult a physician before beginning any exercise program. These exercises and their descriptions were taken from my personal experience, doctors, and websites listed under "websites with exercise", which can be found under the "resources" tab. I do not give permission to copy any of the content on this page for use on their own personal/business website without asking first. If you just ask, I'll probably say yes! ☺*

Okay, now that we got the legal jargon out of the way, on to the exercises!

## Crunchy Frog

*center abs, hip flexors, thighs, hamstrings*

- This exercise is similar to an “in and out”, but instead of supporting yourself with your arms, they are used. Sit on a mat on the floor. While balancing on your tailbone, and with a slight bend in your legs, lift your feet off the ground. Extend your arms out to the side, with your hands at shoulder level. Exhale as you pull your legs forward, inhale as you push them out, without letting them touch the ground. Every time you push your legs forward, open your arms wide. When you pull your knees toward your chest, bring your arms back in to embrace your knees.

## Banana Boat

*center abs*

- Begin lying on your back. Reach your arms long up overhead, and if your shoulders allow, join your palms together. Zip everything in real tight. On an inhale, lift your legs a few inches to a foot off the earth, and then do the same with your arms, head and shoulders. Be mindful to keep your head in line with your arms. You are now in the shape of a banana (or a boat). Moving from your core here and drawing your lower back down towards the earth, begin to rock up and down the spine, moving with the breath. Inhale forward, exhale back. Try to maintain the banana shape without letting arms or legs touch down or lift too high. Work it for as long as you can. Don't hold your breath!

## Fifer Scissors

*center abs (especially lower),obliques, also mildly works back, glutes, and hamstrings*

- Both feet should be flexed. Extend one leg as straight as possible a few inches above the floor, and the other leg straight up to point to the ceiling, this leg should also be as straight as possible. Hold position for five seconds, then switch legs so that each one will take the position of the other leg. There will always be one leg that is straight to the ceiling and one leg straight, parallel to the floor.

## Lying Leg Raises

*center abs, especially lower center abs*

- Lie on your back with your legs extended and your palms on the floor by your sides. Contract your abdominal muscles and tuck your pelvis by pressing your lower back into the floor and lifting your tailbone slightly up. Hold this contract as you lift your straight legs up to a 90-degree angle. Keep pressing your back into the floor and focusing on maintaining the contraction in your lower abs as you slowly lower your legs back down to the floor. Lightly touch your heels to the floor, then go right into your next repetition, without letting go of your abdominal contraction. Perform as many repetitions as you can do with proper form.

## Reverse Crunches

*center abs, especially lower abs, glutes*

- Lie on your back and bring your legs up to a 90-degree angle with your hips, or as close to it as possible. Place your palms on the floor next to your hips for support. Contract your abdominal muscles by pressing your back into the ground and slightly lifting your tailbone. Continue to lift the tailbone by curling it up off the floor and deepening the contraction in your lower abs. Press your feet straight up toward the ceiling. Use only your abdominal strength and very little momentum. Lower back down to the floor without releasing the abdominal contraction and immediately perform your next repetition. Perform one to three sets of as many repetitions as you can.

## Flutter Kicks

*center abs, especially lower central abs*

- Start by lying down on your back with hands underneath your hips. Lift and hold both legs about six inches off the floor. Keep your legs straight and slowly kick your feet up and down with a short range of motion.

## Oblique V-Ups

### *obliques, center abs*

- This exercise really works the deep abdominal muscles. Lie on one side with your ankles overlapping and your body bent slightly at the waist for balance so you will not tip over. Rest your lower hand on your waist while your other hand is behind your ear like for a crunch (your elbow should be toward the ceiling). Now, try to pull your ribs toward your hip by engaging your oblique. While doing this you should be pulling your ankles and knees as well as your shoulder you are lying on off of the ground. Use your hand that is on your side to feel for your oblique tightening. This is an advanced exercise. Beginners may need to place some weight on their elbow and use it as a pivot point. It may also take some time before being able to pull your knees from the ground, but until then, squeeze your obliques as tight as you can to take as much weight off your knees as possible.

### Abdominal Twists

#### *obliques, builds core stability*

- To perform a abdominal twist, sit on the ground holding your hands clasped together to your chest. Lean back until your torso is near a 45 degree angle with the ground. Cross your ankles and raise your legs with your knees bent. Balance on your butt as you hold the plate a few inches from your body and rotate, trying to touch your clasped hands to the ground on either side.

### Side Bridge

#### *builds core stability, internal oblique, external oblique, back, hip adductors*

- Lay down on your right side on the mat, bringing your arm to rest on your right elbow, and allowing your right forearm to also rest comfortably on the ground. Extend your legs out on the mat, so that you are completely on your right side. As you exhale your breath, use the muscles in your core to lift your hips and buttocks off the ground. The only contact points your body should now have with the ground are your elbow, forearm and feet. Make sure your body is in a straight, diagonal line from your shoulders to your feet. Slowly lower it back down to the starting position.

### Windshield Wipers

#### *obliques*

- Lie on your back. Reach your hands out to either side, palms down. You'll need them to stabilize yourself. Lift your legs straight up, then rotate your hips from side to side, lowering your legs until they almost touch the ground.

### Bridge

#### *abs, lower back*

- Lie on your back with your knees bent upward. Keep your back in a neutral position, neither arched nor pressed into the floor beneath you. Contract your abdominal muscles and slowly raise your hips up from the floor until they are even with your knees and shoulders. Hold the exercise for about 10 seconds and then return to the starting position.

### Hip Extension

#### *lower back, glutes*

- Begin by kneeling on the floor with your knees under your hips and your hands beneath your shoulders. Extend your right leg behind you at hip level, hold for two seconds, then lower to starting position and repeat with left leg.

### Bird Dogs

#### *lower back*

- Bird dogs are performed from a position on all fours. To do these, place your hands directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Once in position, extend your left arm straight in front

of you and your right leg straight behind you. After getting your arm and leg parallel to the floor, hold for 5 to 10 seconds, lower your arm and leg and repeat with the other side.

## Plank (High or Low)

*back, abs, builds core stability*

- High Plank

Lie face down in a push-up position. Keep your palms on the floor next to your shoulders and your feet flexed with the bottoms of your toes on the floor. Take a deep breath and press up into a push-up. Your body should make a straight line from your heels to the top of your head. Draw your navel toward your spine and tighten your buttocks. Look at the floor to keep your head in neutral position and breathe normally. Hold for 10 to 60 seconds and lower yourself back to the floor.

- Low Plank

Lie face down with your forearms on the floor and your elbows directly beneath your shoulders. Keep your feet flexed with the bottoms of your toes on the floor. Clasp your hands in front of your face, so your forearms make an inverted "V." Rise up on your toes so that only your forearms and toes touch the floor--your body should hover a few inches off the floor. Draw your navel toward your spine and tighten your buttocks. Look at the floor to keep your head in neutral position and breathe normally. Hold for 10 to 60 seconds and lower yourself back to the floor.

## Superman

*back (especially lower back and muscles along spine), glutes, hamstrings*

- Lie face down on your stomach with arms and legs extended. Keep your neck in a neutral position. Keeping your arms and legs straight (but not locked) and torso stationary, simultaneously lift your arms and legs up toward the ceiling to form an elongated "u" shape with your body — back arches and arms and legs several inches off the floor. Hold anywhere from 5 to 20 seconds, whatever you are able to do, and lower back down to complete one.