Copyright Notice

No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage or retrieval system without expressed written, dated and signed permission from the author. All copyrights are reserved.

Disclaimer and/or Legal Notices

The information provided in this book is for educational purposes only. I am not a doctor and this is not meant to be taken as medical advice. The information provided in this book is based upon my experiences as well as my interpretations of the current research available.

The advice and tips given in this course are meant for healthy adults only. You should consult your physician to insure the tips given in this course are appropriate for your individual circumstances.

If you have any health issues or pre-existing conditions, please consult with your physician before implementing any of the information provided in this course.

This product is for informational purposes only and the author does not accept any responsibilities for any liabilities or damages, real or perceived, resulting from the use of this information.

By Rusty Moore

Visual Impact Fitness
Table of Contents

Introduction: Why So Few People Have 6 Packs Abs.  5
What 23 years in the gym has taught me about what it takes to have head turning abs...and why so few ever get there.

----------Part 1 - The Exercises----------

Chapter 01: An Introduction to Leg Raises  8
I will explain why I'm convinced that working the abs using your legs as resistance is the best approach to take.

Chapter 02: Lying Leg Raises  10
Although many consider this to be a beginner exercise, I will show you why it works the lower abs especially well.

Chapter 03: Hanging Leg Raises  12
How to slowly work up from hanging knee ups, all the way to more advanced versions of hanging leg raises.

Chapter 04: Planks  16
The perfect ab exercise to ensure even ab development from top to bottom as well as reinforce good posture.

Chapter 05: The Ab Wheel  20
A harder stabilization exercise than the plank. Effective if done right, damaging if done wrong!

Chapter 06: Renegade Rows  22
This exercise tightens the heck out of your obliques and the muscles that “frame” your abs.
Chapter 07: Hip Bridges and Back Bridges
Why you should include bridging after every ab workout. This is crucial for spine health.

----------Part 2 - The Workout Variables------------>

Chapter 08: Low Velocity vs High Velocity Training
When to use slow reps, when to speed up the tempo, and when to use explosive reps to increase tension.

Chapter 09: Low Reps vs High Reps
When it makes sense to use high reps for an ab exercise and when it makes sense to use low reps.

Chapter 10: The Ab Development Blueprints
6 specific routines that work especially well for getting a tight and defined midsection.

Chapter 11: Working Around a Back Injury
How to work your abs with an injured back. What exercises to avoid at all costs.

Chapter 12: Great Abs for Life
What you will need to do to improve as you age, instead of “getting old” like most people.
Introduction

Why So Few People Have 6 Pack Abs

So before I dig into the meat of this course and tell you what it takes to get great abs, lets discuss why six pack abs are a rare thing.

**Obviously body fat needs to be low enough to reveal proper ab definition.**

I am guessing that most people reading this course already know this. I created this ab blueprint for people who already have the basics down. I just wanted to cover this point for the few who don't understand the importance of low body fat.

**Ever See the TV Show Survivor?** On Survivor almost everyone eventually has visible abs. The reason isn't that they are doing ab workouts. They have simply starved away all body fat. I'm not suggesting that this is the approach you take to get great abs...I'm just using this as an example to prove a point.

Without low body fat, your abs will never be visible.
You could have the deepest most dense abs in the world. If you aren't lean it won't matter. So insure you create a calorie deficit through diet and exercise until you get lean. You can do this while simultaneously working this program.

With low enough body fat...even average ab muscles look decent.

**So Low Body Fat, goes a long way in revealing amazing ab definition.**

...but getting razor sharp abs takes a little more effort. Plus when you develop your ab muscles properly, you won't have to reach this low of body fat to display great ab definition.

Those contestants on *Survivor* don't hold that low body fat for long. Within a few weeks of being done with the show they quickly put on a lot of the body fat that they lost on the show. That ab definition is gone.

**Ab Density helps you reveal ab definition with more fat on your body.**

It is tough to maintain ultra-low levels of body fat year round. Almost every guy will have great looking abs at 6% body fat. For women it will be around 12%. The problem is that it takes hardcore discipline to stay towards those lower ranges.

[It can be fun to reach low body fat for events like vacations.]
So Why Aren't We Seeing More Six Pack Abs?

...I've had a gym membership since 1987 (yes I feel old). Anyway, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt why very few people have great looking abs.

1. Most of the people who focus on intense workouts, don't focus enough on creating a calorie deficit (through diet and calorie burning exercise).

2. The people who do focus on calorie deficit, typically don't train with enough intensity to develop ab density.

3. When people work abs they do a lot of low quality exercises...instead of a laser focused attack on the best ab exercises.

I see a lot of various versions of crunches.

Crunches on the floor, Swiss Ball crunches, cable crunches, Nautilus machine crunches, etc.

The only time I would recommend crunches? Possibly to a beginner for 3-4 weeks. This would only be to help them “feel their abs” when training. Once they got the feel down, we would move on and never look back.

What about weighted crunches?

Honestly, this will slowly destabilize and wear away at your back. It is also very likely to give you that “hunched forward” posture. Not only that, they don't work the abs even close to effectively as leg raises.

So lets talk about leg raises...
Chapter 1
An Introduction to Leg Raises

So let's talk about this ab diagram:

The *Rectus Abdominis* is the muscle you see when you are looking at 6 pack abs.

It is actually one big muscle, and it simply has the illusion of being a bunch of separate muscles.

This illusion is caused by the tendons which criss cross the *Rectus Abdominus*.

(I'll refer to other parts of this diagram later).

**The 2 main functions of this big ab muscle.**

1. To stabilize during rotation of the upper and lower trunk.

2. Flexes the spine forward.

Both stabilizing and forward flexing of the spine is important in optimal ab development. Let's first talk about flexing of the spine.

Forward flexing of the spine can be done from focusing on the upper torso...or it can be done originating from the lower body.

The majority of people are “upper torso” focused.
The thing about it. Almost everybody you see in the gym working their abs is simply doing situp or crunch style ab exercises.

Your body is completely accustomed to the stimulus that sit ups and crunches produce. The problem is that doing more of this type of ab exercise...even with more resistance...will just improve the abs slightly.

Various leg raises, however, are a shock to the system!

Your body has been doing situp type movements all of your life. Every day when you get up out of bed. In fact going from a sitting to standing position uses a similar motion.

Even an untrained person is close to their situp potential.

I'm not saying that a beginner is as strong as a veteran when it comes to situps. I am saying that a lot more stimulus in this movement isn't going to make a huge impact on ab development.

Improving in leg raises will cause the biggest impact on ab development.

It will take years for you to become an expert at leg raises. By the time leg raises are as easy as crunching movements for you, your abs will most likely be sharper than just about anyone you come in contact with.

Leg raises are much tougher than situps or crunching type movements. Most people will simply not stick with them. Most people will do them as an afterthought. Those who master this exercise will have ab density and definition at a level others can't touch.

In fact, I've never met a person who was strong at leg raises with average looking abs. Mastering the leg raise delivers great abs every time!

By Rusty Moore
Chapter 2
Lying Leg Raises

Lying leg raises are simply doing leg raises while lying on a floor mat. Many people consider these to be a beginner exercise (compared to the hanging leg raise), but I'll explain why this is a narrow view of this exercise.

The one advantage that lying leg raises has over hanging leg raises is this...the toughest point happens right as soon as your legs leave the floor. As you lift your legs to 90 degrees, the resistance lessens. Once you reach 90 degrees, where the legs are above your hips...there is very little resistance at all.

This is a completely different effect than hanging leg raises.

With hanging leg raises the least resistance happens as soon as you begin to lift your legs forward. The most resistance happens when your legs reach the 90 degree mark.

This makes lying leg raises perfect for low ab specialization.

You will have the ability to do higher reps with lying leg raises. I find that working your way up to 5 sets of 20 reps is a way to get the most out of these.

Here is a tip that will ensure that they blast your lower abs: Do these at a
slightly faster tempo than you are accustomed to doing ab exercises. The focus should be on “reversing” the movement at the bottom. Do this quickly, without touching your heels to the ground or resting.

Then, as you get stronger purposely accelerate your legs and the way down and aim for an even faster “reverse”. Done properly this is like explosive lifting, but for your lower abs. The repeated strong contractions are going to carve the heck out of your lower abs. The fast reverse requires serious lower ab stabilization.

Lying leg raises are great at developing the muscle that separates the legs with the lower abs.

**Many people call this the “v” muscle.**

This looks great on both men and women, but obviously it will be more pronounced on guys.

Hanging leg raises will work this as well, but lying leg raises target it better.

**Note:** I would NOT recommend working lying and hanging leg raises on the same day. I will talk more about workout setup as well as rep tempo later.
Hanging Leg Raises

Hanging leg raises are the “Holy Grail” of ab exercises. In fact just the mere act of doing any type of training from the chin up bar...works the hell out of your abs.

**Athletes that do a lot of “bar work” always have outstanding abs.**

Gymnasts are a prime example of this. Special forces units in the military are another example...these guys do tons of chin ups and have the abs (and back) to prove it. There is also a fitness group in Brooklyn, NY who do 90% of their workouts on chin up bars.

The entire [Bar-Barian](#) crew have some of the best abs you will ever see. None of these guys are photo shopped or prep for a special event. They all have crazy dense abs from “time on the bar”.

(I realize that this picture was taken on the parallel bars)

**Hint:** On back day do chin ups instead of lat pull downs. The abs have to
contract hard just to keep the legs in proper alignment with your body on each rep. This will help you reach your goal quicker as well.

Simply doing hanging leg raises in any variation will go a long ways towards getting six pack abs, but there are a bunch of different variations.

I'd like to describe the 3 Basic Versions first...

**The Bent Leg Raise (Intermediate)**

So first I want to show a diagram of how to perform the bent leg raise, because then you make small tweaks to make it easier or tougher.

![Diagram of bent leg raise](image)

So the first picture is the starting position. The second picture is close to the final position. I would recommend going a little bit higher to flex the spine a little. This will insure a strong ab contraction.

The idea is for bent leg raises is to keep the legs in a fixed bent position throughout the duration of the set. You don't need to straighten the legs all the way at the bottom as shown.

**Tip:** When you first do these you can bend at the knees more to make these easier. Straighten the legs out as you get stronger.
Knee Ups (Beginner)

So this is a similar exercise to bent leg raises, except you are simply focusing on raising the knees up past the level you your hips. The legs don't stay in a locked position. You go from a straight hang at the bottom to knees bent at least 90 degrees as you reach the top.

(To be perfectly honest with you, I didn't do these for very long. Move on to various version of bent leg raises as soon as possible, since they will get results at a faster pace for you).

Hanging Leg Raise (Advanced)

This is simply the same exercise as the bent leg raise, but with the legs held straight. As you get stronger with bent leg raises, slowly straighten out your legs over time. In a few months you should be able to do leg raises with your legs fairly straight.

Tip: I typically do these with a slight bend in the knees. I find that when I go all the way straight...my hamstrings aren't flexible enough for a good range of motion. With my legs all the way straight, it irritates my back as well. So find out what degree of leg bend works best for you.

I'd recommend sticking with these 3 variations for your first few months of training. You don't need to raise your legs much past the 90 degree point, until these become too easy for you.

...but I feel compelled to show you some of the effective tweaks here.

Feet-to-the-Bar Bent Leg Raises

After a year of hanging leg raises, me and my workout partner implement this intense version of bent leg raises. Instead of stopping where your legs are at 90 degrees and your feet are directly in front of your hips...lean back a little and keep raising your feet until they touch the bar.
I don't recommend doing these with straight legs unless you have amazing flexibility. Me and my workout buddy did these with our knees bent at 90 degrees and it still worked the heck out of abs.

**Feet-to-the-Bar Bent Leg Raises (Advanced)**

Here the difference is that you go all the way up to where your feet touch the bar...but you only go as low as the mid point. So you are essentially starting at the finishing portion of a regular hanging bent leg raise. This doesn't give your abs any chance to recover, because you are working the “flexing” function pretty darn hard.

To make these even tougher, use that “quick reverse” technique I explained for lying leg raises. As soon as your feet are directly in front of your hips, do a quick reverse and get your feet up back to the bar.

**Warning:** These feet-to-the-bar hanging leg raises are especially tough on the spine. I would only recommend doing these 1-2 times per week max...and be sure to follow up this exercise with either “hip bridges” or “back bridges”.

**The Golf Pro “Hit Every Angle” Hanging Leg Raise**

So me and my college buddy were introduced to a special version of hanging leg raise by a Golf Pro. This guy has the best abs I have ever seen (even to
this day).

I call these...“Swinging Side to Side Bent Knee Ups”

- Raise your knee higher than your hips while moving both knees to the right side of your body.
- Lower your knee while moving your knees back to your center. Dip them down lower than your hips (but not all the way down).
- Move your legs to your left as you raise them to higher than your hips.

Tip: Follow this arc in a smooth manner (back and forth without pausing). Keep your body facing and head facing forward. Do this as a burnout exercise to failure. Go as long as possible until you can't do these anymore. This really develops the “V” where the hips and lower abs meet. This also develops the obliques and other muscles that “frame” the abs.
Planks

This was the exercise that I used exclusively to maintain decently toned abs without injuring my back. If you have a back injury and want to have great looking abs, this is your best option by far.

This is the standard regular plank. The idea is to hold this position for 1-2 minutes. Once you can work up to 2 minutes you will eventually get solid abs. I'll give you a more detailed routine in a sec.

Planks train your abs to be in a contracted state when your spine is in a neutral position. Most other ab exercises require either flexing forward of the spine or your lower or upper trunk to rotate forward.

This is a BIG deal!

When you are on vacation and laying on a towel or walking down the beach, your spine is in a neutral position. Planks insure that your abs display muscle tone during these times.

This is why I recommend planks even if you don't have back issues.

Planks also seem to ensure even ab development. Your entire torso has to flex to ensure that your body stays rigid. The first thing I noticed after doing planks for three months is that all the muscles in my torso were equally developed. Before doing planks my upper 4 abs were much more defined than the rest of my midsection.

By Rusty Moore

17

Visual Impact Fitness
Another reason to do planks?

Side planks tighten the obliques without adding size.

Since all styles of planks are isometric in nature, they aren't going to build muscle. You want to do your best to avoid adding size to the obliques...instead you want to develop tight rock hard obliques...and side planks do the trick.

**Simply rest on your elbows as shown and hold for 1-2 minutes.**

Here's an easy Plank routine to do at home before bed.

1) I put my iPhone in stopwatch mode, then hit start and immediately go into regular plank position.

2) After 2 minutes, I hit “lap” and then do a side plank on my right side.

3) After 1 minute I hit lap and then do a plank on my left side.

4) After 1 minute on my left, I am done.

Obviously you don't need an iPhone. I used to set the microwave timer for 3 minutes and just kept an eye on it. Works just as well.

**Here is another plank routine that works well.**

By Rusty Moore
I call these “Shifting Endurance Planks”

Go into a regular plank and hold for as long as possible. Once it gets tough, go straight into a right side plank and hold as long as possible. Once that gets tough roll back to the regular position and hold as long as possible. At that point roll to your left.

The key is to maintain plank position as long as possible without your knees touching the floor. You are simply rolling from position to position until finally your core gives out. I worked up to 15 minutes before a vacation a few years back and it really tightened up my entire mid section.

Planks don't damage the muscle as much as other ab exercises.

You could actually do a planks workout almost every day since it is a static isometric hold. It doesn't tear down the muscle like exercises that involve moving through a range of motion. Although, you can train these often...3-4 times per week is plenty.

Warning: Don't ever do those side bends where you hold a dumbbell in one arm and bend against resistance...this will build size to your oblique muscles. Bigger obliques aren't what you are aiming for.
The Ab Wheel

Once planks get easy, then you may want to add in the ab wheel. The ab wheel is great if used properly, but you are asking for back problems if you do this wrong.

I have a friend who used to work for a chiropractor and a lot of patients came in as a result of the ab wheel (when an expensive version was being promoted on late night infomercials a few years back).

The Ab Wheel can be used a few different ways.

- From your knees or from a standing position.
- You can vary how far you roll out.
- For reps or for static holds.
- Spine neutral or spine flexed.

I recommend that you do NOT do these from a standing position. The problem with doing these from your feet is that your spine gets flexed forward in such an extreme manner that you are asking for an injury.

I prefer to use these for static hold over doing them for reps. My favorite technique involves rolling the wheel forward 6 inches at a time and holding each position for 10 seconds. Then once it gets extremely hard, work it back towards you 6 inches at a time.

Warning: You have to pay attention to your spine throughout the movement.

By Rusty Moore
It is easy to flex the spine too far backward in this exercise. Keep the arch in your lower back in a neutral position.

One of the reasons I prefer to do these as a series of static holds over high tempo reps...is that there is much less of a chance of injury.

**Tip:** This is one that you can easily do at home. Like planks, this exercise isn't going to break down the muscle as much as other ab exercises. You can do these several times per week when you have time.

...the cool thing is that it will take up just 3-5 minutes of your time.
Chapter 6
Renegade Rows

Renegade Rows are an exercise you will rarely see being performed. It is too bad because these are an awesome exercise. This will transform your obliques and tighten up your waist, etc.

Renegade Rows do several things.

- Increase the density and muscle tone of your entire torso.
- Strengthen your hands to handle heavier weights.
- Strengthen your shoulders, chest, biceps, & triceps simultaneously.
- Make your spine more resistant to injury.

Let me do my best to explain why renegade rows are such an effective exercise for the obliques.

The obliques have two main functions.

1. To help bend the spine from side to side.
2. To twist the spine.

Side planks are an isometric exercise for the first function of the obliques. The obliques are contracting hard resisting the side to side forces when we are doing side planks. Remember...we want to stick with isometric exercises to insure we don't add size to the obliques.
So how do we do an isometric exercise for the twisting function?

Well...that is where renegade rows come in! When you are rowing with the right arm, your body badly wants to twist to the right. Your obliques have to contract hard to insure that you don't twist at the waist.

The heavier you go with these, the harder your abs and obliques have to contract to fight against this twist. This will increase definition over time...without adding size.

They are pretty straight forward to perform (look at the picture on the previous page as a reference).

- Set two dumbbells on the ground parallel to each other.
- Get in push up position while grabbing the dumbbell handles.
- Set your feet wider than shoulder width apart.
- Row one dumbbell up to your lower rib cage.
- Lower back down and transfer body weight to that arm.
- Row with the other arm.

**Tip:** The key is the weight transfer from one arm to the other. This isn't a fast movement. Slowly raise the dumbbell, lower to the floor, the take a second to transfer the body weight to that arm as you pull up with the opposite arm.

...at first you will have to go pretty light. It may be uncomfortable on your hands and wrists at first. This is actually a HUGE side benefit. It will strengthen your hands over time and make exercises like bench presses feel lighter in your hands.

As you are able to handle heavier weights with renegade rows, this strength will transfer over to many other lifts.
Chapter 7

Hip Bridges & Back Bridges

This chapter is an important read, even if you have never suffered a spinal injury. If you master “bridging”, you will drastically reduce your chances of ever suffering back pain or back injuries.

I badly injured my spine over 20 years ago, doing leg presses. The funny thing was that it wasn't even close to my max weight. I am convinced that this happened due to the fact that I did crunches before I began my leg workout.

In fact, I would say that all the ab flexing exercises I was doing back then was slowly destabilizing my spine. Here is what Stuart McGill (world's top back injury specialist) says about exercises that flex the spine forward.

“When the spine is fully flexed, we've measured the spine losing up to 40% of its ability to bear compressive loads. In other words, the spine is strongest when in a neutral position.”

After reading Stuart McGill's widely acclaimed “Low Back Disorders” book, I learned that exercises that flex the spine forward destabilize the spine...long after the exercise is finished!
Even worse is that the destabilizing effect is cumulative.

...so the spine gets more and more destabilized over time. Many people with amazing abs have put their lower backs in major jeopardy without even knowing it.

This is exactly what happened to me! So because of this, in the past I recommended avoiding any ab exercise that flexed the spine forward. This included crunches, situps, hanging leg raises, every Nautilus ab machine, etc.

I have changed my outlook on this...BUT only if you add in bridging.

The hip bridge is the main exercise I prefer. Some people who are more flexible and who have a less “dodgy” lower back can do well with the full back bridge...

By doing a bridge you are reinforcing the natural curve in your spine. This counteracts any negative destabilizing effect of ab exercises that “flex the spine forward”.

By Rusty Moore
I like to perform bridges as static holds...much like planks.

Typically I will lay down on an exercise mat and do a hip bridge where I push my hips up high. As time passes I slowly push higher and higher as my hip flexors get stretched and my back gets arched. I hold this for 3-4 minutes.

After doing these, you will feel a bit taller!

This may be the ultimate exercise for posture. It also stretched out tight hip flexors...which tend to be tight from doing leg raises, running, etc.

**Major warning:** Before I read Stuart McGill's book on back injuries, I thought roman chair hyperextensions were making my lower back stronger. These actually further destabilize the spine because it flexes the spine forward toward the bottom of lift. If you are doing these...STOP!

Note: There are several different versions of these roman chairs. I would recommend that you don't ever do these again.
Chapter 8
Low Velocity VS
High Velocity Training

So usually people fall into one school of thought when it comes to training. There are those people who recommend that you do your reps slow to avoid using momentum...and there are people who believe that explosive training increases your ability to generate force in a lift.

I believe in a mix of both high speed reps and slower and controlled reps.

Slow rep speed (low velocity) benefits: Your muscles experience more time under tension when each rep is done in a slow and controlled manner. You also can increase the mind to muscle link when you have the ability to squeeze the muscle each rep. High time under tension contributes to muscle tone.

High rep speed (high velocity) benefits: You can mimic the effects of lifting a heavier weight, because you must generate strong contractions for a high speed movement. You can experience maximum tension in a muscle without maximum weight...in a way that is different from doing the movement slowly.

So I believe in a mix of time under tension (low velocity)...and faster high tension training (high velocity). This combo will give you much better results than training just one way or the other.

I'll explain how the strategically mix these together once we reach the workout section.

By Rusty Moore
Visual Impact Fitness
Chapter 9
Low Reps VS High Reps

A lot of well meaning trainers will tell you that low reps build size and that high reps “tone” the muscles. If you have a personal trainer that has ever said that to you...RUN! I'm serious :)

Fatigue and volume builds muscle.

I could write a whole book on this subject (in fact I have). I don't have enough space in this course to explain in as much detail as I would like, but the fastest way to build muscle...is to “break the muscle down” by training close to failure with a high volume of sets and reps.

There are two main types of muscle growth.

- Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy
- Myofibrillar Hypertrophy

High reps = Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy: Sarcoplasmic growth is caused by an increase of the fluids within the muscle cell. This is the fastest way to increase the size of a muscle...but since sarcoplasm is a fluid and can't contract...it won't make the muscle significantly stronger. This is why sometimes a huge body builder isn't as strong as a smaller Olympic Lifter.

Low reps = Myofibrillar Hypertrophy: This is actual muscle fiber growth. This improves strength, but leads to limited gains in muscle size. Think of a water-balloon...to make it bigger it would be much faster and easier to fill it with water than to make the rubber thicker...but thicker rubber would probably make the balloon stronger.

You are going to want to aim for some growth in your abs.

By Rusty Moore
You do need to increase the size of your *Rectus Abdominis* muscle in order to have deep abs. You also are going to want to increase the density or “hardness” of your abs. This is why it is important to do both high rep as well as low rep training.

**Won't increasing the size of the abs give me a belly?**

I think a lot of people are worried that they will wind up with those nasty “bodybuilder abs”...where there is a ripped six pack...but the guy looks like he is pregnant. This is called a distended stomach.

A distended stomach is NOT caused by developed ab muscles.

Typically this is a steroid side effect...especially if the person has low body fat and looks 6 months pregnant. The funny thing is that almost every top “professional” bodybuilder has this to a certain extent (...and yes they ALL use steroids these days).

**Eugen Sandow (1867-1925)**

Before steroids, distended stomachs were unheard of on guys who trained to get in peak condition. Here is an example of ab muscles that are developed to the max.

If you can get over his funny hair and mustache, you are looking at a seriously impressive physique. In fact, he is sporting some amazing abs. Eugen Sandow is my role model when it comes to ab development.

Some exercises naturally lend themselves to higher or lower rep ranges. We will discuss this in further detail once we hit the specific workouts.

By Rusty Moore

Visual Impact Fitness
Chapter 10
The Ab Development Blueprints

So this workout is actually a “blueprint” with room for a lot of customization and the ability to add or substitute in different exercises. The main goal is to show you the proper rep ranges, rep speed, frequency, and exercise mix that will create outstanding abs. You will tweak this a bit to fit your exact goals.

Women will want maximum development as well...which will result in a firm and flat stomach with just a “hint” of definition.

So as you can see...this woman has firm flat abs, light ab definition, a lower ab “v”, etc. This requires just as much focus as a guy to get deep six pack abs...so the workouts will be the same.

Note to the Women: If you do feel your abs are beginning to look too ripped, I'll show you what you need to avoid. It is very unlikely that this will happen, but I got you covered just in case.

This is going to be presented in an unusual way.
Instead of just outlining standard ab workouts to follow, I am going to present you with a bunch of workouts that both me and my workout partners have used over the years with outstanding results.

I don't just want to lay the workouts out, I want to explain why we chose each exercise and set and rep scheme. The thinking behind each workout is where the value lies.

**Pick a routine and copy it at first...then tweak and customize.**

Every single person I know who is in outstanding shape, follows a winning formula based on solid principles...but then adjusts that formula over time...to create the ideal workout for their body.

**My ideal workout will be different than your ideal workout.**

It would probably be easier for me to take the easy route and just lay out a few specific routines for you. The problem with that is that I haven't given you any lasting value if I take that approach. My goal with this course is flexibility. This way you can use this an blueprint for many years to come, instead of just 3-6 months.

Let's get to the workouts...

**The Flat Abs Workout**

This workout is perfect for women who want a nice bikini body without any chance of too much ab definition. It seems almost too simple, but works extremely well. Guys can use this workout to maintain the ab definition they already have.

- **Lying leg raises for 5 sets of 20 reps:** This is done two times per week. It works best to do these right before your lifting session. This is easier than it sounds. The last two sets burn like crazy.
- **Hip Bridges**: These are to be done right after your final set of lying leg raises. Hold a hip bridge for a few minutes and simply push your hips higher and higher as your muscles relax.

- **Planks**: Simply one plank hold to the front for 2 minutes and 1 minute on the left and right sides. Done two times per week.

**Tips**: Do these at a high velocity to get a strong contraction each rep. Decrease rest in between sets as your strength improves.

**The Thinking Behind This Workout**: The lying leg raises are mainly an ab stabilization exercise with just a bit of forward flex. Since it is a stability exercise, there is very little chance of an increase in size of the abdominal region. The hip bridges are thrown in afterward to improve posture and maintain back health.

**Possible Tweaks**: Add in a 3rd workout per week where you do hanging leg raises & renegade rows. This is exactly the workout I'm doing now. I do this lying leg raise workout on Monday and Friday with my girlfriend and I do an intense hanging leg raise workout and renegade rows on Wednesday. This works well for guys with a lot of experience and a strong mind-to-muscle link. It doesn't take as many sets to get a positive effect in the abs.

**The “Skinny Fat” Killer**

So there are a lot of men and women who are skinny and pudgy with very little definition at all. High intensity training is probably the key here. Most people who are skinny fat, simply don't push the intensity levels as high as needed for great definition.

- **Hanging Leg Raises**: We need to go straight to the exercise with the biggest bang for the buck. Obviously most will need to progress from knee ups, to the bent leg version...but the goal is to work up to straight
leg hanging leg raises. This will be done for 5 sets of 5 “slow” reps...3 times per week.

- **Renegade Rows**: These will be done for 5 sets of 3 reps (per side). This will be done after hanging leg raises. The goal here will be to start light and slowly add weight until you are using some pretty heavy dumbbells in this lift.

- **Ab Wheel Roll-Outs**: So two times per week, you will want to do ab wheel roll-outs. You can get an ab wheel for $10-$15 at most sporting goods stores or online. The cheap ones are fine. From your knees, roll out the ab wheel one foot at a time...holding each position for 10 seconds...then roll back in one foot at a time. You aren't aiming for a certain amount of sets...simply do this for 10 minutes.

- **Hip Bridges**: Done for 3-5 minutes to stretch out the abs, hip flexors, quads, etc. after each ab workout.

**Tips**: Do the hanging leg raises for 5 slow reps, you don't want to do these at a fast speed just yet. Be careful with the ab wheel roll-outs, don't let your spine hyper-extend.

**The Thinking Behind This Workout**: A skinny fat person needs intensity above everything else. They need to blitz the abs with the toughest exercises and save the detail stuff for later. This should be worked for 6 months minimum before moving on. After 6 months the former skinny fat person should have a much greater degree of muscle development in the abs and then choose a more specialized workout at that time.

**Possible Tweaks**: Drop the ab wheel roll-outs. You could also do hanging leg raises 4 times per week about 4-6 weeks before you decide to change your workout up. This would result in over-training if done long-term...but will push a little more development if only done for a month. Also...if you feel strong enough, add in a few of the more advanced hanging leg raise variations.
One More Thing: If someone is skinny fat they should also include some type of HGH boosting interval training. Either circuit training or HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training). This will boost HGH which will strip away the excess body fat. Again...it needs to be the intense stuff.

Lower Ab Specialization

So all of these routines will hit the lower abs, but you can target the lower abs even further by focusing mainly on various leg raises. I actually believe the lying leg raise is the best lower ab exercise. This workout is only meant to be done for 4-6 weeks max. I like to use this one before spring to ensure that my lower abs are up to par, before hitting my summer prep ab workout.

- **Lying Leg Raises**: Four times per week. Work your way up to 5 sets of 20 reps. No matter how strong your abs become, those last 2 sets of 20 reps are brutal!

- **Hip or Back Bridges**: Spend some time and really make sure that you release all of the tension from the abs and hip flexors.

**Tips**: As your strength improves, speed up the reps. Don't go high on this one...mainly concentrate on the lower 3/5th of the range of motion. This will keep tension on the lower abs throughout the entire movement. As you improve in strength you will be able to quickly reverse the downward motion into an upward motion. This quick “reverse” will create strong contractions in your lower abs and will improve definition as a result.

**The Thinking Behind This Workout**: So we are simply specializing on the most effective lower ab exercise. We are also pushing the volume and frequency to the brink of over-training. Doing this for a long period of time would surely result in over-training, but for 4-6 weeks it will result in extra work for your lower abs. This extra work will pay off in extra definition...as well as a permanent mind-to-muscle improvement in the lower abs.
Possible Tweaks: Replace 2 of the lying leg raise workouts with hanging leg raises. For the hanging leg raises, just make sure the focus is on the bottom portion of the movement. If you raise your legs too high, the tension moves away from your lower abs to your upper ab region.

Deep Abs Level 1

So to get really deep six pack abs, we are going to have to add in a little more of the exercises that flex the spine forward a bit. Since we are going to flex the spine forward, extra care needs to be taken to work hip bridges and back bridges. These can't be done as an afterthought.

- **Feet-to-the-Bar Bent Leg Raises**: So we will do these 3 times per week. Aim for 5 total sets. Work your way up to 5 sets of 10 reps...this will take a while to reach this level.

- **Swinging Side to Side Bent Knee Ups**: This is the burnout exercise that the golf pro taught me back in college. Do one set of these to failure. Just hold on to the bar and steadily swing your knees to the right...dip your knees back down towards the middle...then back up to the left.

- **Renegade Rows**: 5 sets of 3 reps. Work your way up to some heavy dumbbells.

- **Planks**: One static front plank hold for at least 2 minutes. This is going to hurt. If you are a sicko, you can work up to 3 minutes.

- **Hip or Back Bridges**: Do these for at least 5 minutes as soon as your ab workout is done. Do these again sometime late in the day at home if possible.

Tips: The feet to the bar bent leg raises can be done in a slow and steady manner or you can do more explosively. Only use explosive reps on this exercise if your back has been injury free. For the swinging side to side bent
knee ups, your grip will fail before you tire your abs out. You could use wrist wraps, but I'd advise against it. When you increase the strength of your grip it has a carry over effect to the rest of the muscles in the upper body. Even lifts that don't seem directly related to grip, like bench presses, will become easier for you as your grip improves.

**The Thinking Behind This Workout:** “Feet-to-the-Bar Bent Leg Raises” are the toughest stabilization and ab flexing combo exercise. Really this is about as tough as it gets. One of my college buddies was in an amateur bodybuilding contest put on by a sorority and his main focus was this exercise. It transformed his abs from decent to outstanding in about 3 months. Make no mistake about it, this is the main focus. Then we do a burnout exercise which fatigues the obliques to a certain extent. Then create density with Renegade Rows. This is an outstanding ab routine that you can use for 2-3 months at a time.

**Possible Tweaks:** You can switch up anything after the tough feet-to-bar hanging leg raises. If you are short on time just do those, planks, and then a few minutes of bridges and you would still have an outstanding workout.

**Deep Abs Level 2**

So like the previous deep abs routine, we are going to have to add in a little more of the exercises that flex the spine forward a bit. Since we are going to flex the spine forward, extra care needs to be taken to work hip bridges and back bridges. Again, these hip bridges and back bridges need to happen. Make sure you schedule these into your routine.

- **Feet-to-the-Bar Bent Leg Raises (Advanced):** These will be done 3 times per week. Remember this exercise really just focuses on the forward flexing motion even more than the regular version. You are going all the way until your feet touch the bar, but only going as low as where your thighs are parallel with the floor. Once you reach this point curl your pelvis as you lift your feet back up to the bar. Aim for 5 sets.
of 10 reps. I know that sounds impossible, but it will make more sense when you see the description of the next exercise.

- **Leg Raise Burnouts**: So this is a way to get 10 reps in, even when you can't do 10 full feet-to-bar hanging leg raises. The idea is tack on regular hanging leg raises, or knee ups, after you complete each set of your previous exercise. So for example...let's say on the third set of feet-to-bar hanging leg raises that you only can do 6 reps. You would then without pausing, do 4 regular hanging leg raises or knee ups. Once you are able to reach 5 sets of 10 reps with the previous exercise, simply add 5 of these leg raise burnouts.

- **Swinging Side to Side Bent Knee Ups**: This is the burnout exercise that the golf pro taught me back in college. Do one set of these to failure. Just hold on to the bar and steadily swing your knees to the right...dip your knees back down towards the middle...then back up to the left.

- **Renegade Rows**: 5 sets of 3 reps. Work your way up to some heavy dumbbells.

- **Ab Wheel Roll-Outs**: Just do 2 sets of 2-3 minutes of rolling then holding for 10-20 seconds in each progressively tougher position. Think of these as a more intense version of planks. Grab the handles hard and tense your abs as you do these.

- **Hip or Back Bridges**: Do these for at least 5 minutes as soon as your ab workout is done. Do these again sometime late in the day at home if possible.

**Tips**: If you can eventually work up to 5 sets of to reps of the feet-to-bar advanced hanging leg raises...and you can follow each of those sets with 5 hanging leg raise burnouts...you will have crazy ab strength. This will translate into a serious set of six pack abs. It could take a year to be able to build up to these strength levels, so be patient. With patience will come some
amazing abs.

**The Thinking Behind This Workout:** With this exercise we are increasing the intensity up a notch from Deep Abs Version 1. This won't seem like a big difference, but those hanging leg raise burnouts are going to make any ab exercise after that much more challenging. Instead of planks we are going to use the ab wheel. This becomes a tougher stabilization exercise than planks as you roll the wheel further and further away from you.

**Possible Tweaks:** The foundation of this workout is the advanced feet-to-bar hanging leg raises with the hanging leg raise burnouts. You could simply do these and possibly a plank hold, then hip bridges.

**The Beach Prep Tweak**

So this is meant as an add-on to any of the other workouts outlined above. I discovered this a few years back before I took a trip to Playa Del Carmen, Mexico. In fact, because of a back injury...this was all I used with success. If you combine this with any of the other workouts you will most likely get the best abs of your life.

This is to be done separate from your other ab workouts, every day, beginning 21 days before your vacation. We are going to train those abs to display a crazy amount of muscle tone, by training them with strong and frequent static holds contractions...every single day.

- **Front Plank Hold to Failure:** You should be able to work well past 2 minutes with these.

- **Side Planks to Failure:** Hold this on one side for as long as possible, rest one minute, then hit the other side to failure.

- **Shifting Endurance Planks:** Go into a regular plank and hold for as long as possible. Once it gets tough, go straight into a right side plank and

By Rusty Moore

38

Visual Impact Fitness
hold as long as possible. Once that gets tough roll back to the regular position and hold as long as possible. At that point roll to your left. The key is to maintain plank position as long as possible without your knees touching the floor. You are simply rolling from position to position until finally your core gives out. Aim for at least 5-10 minutes.

**Tips:** These planks can be done at home, anywhere you have carpet. It helps if you have an exercise mat (but not mandatory). Also...you can do these in the same visit to the gym as your regular ab workout. The way to do that would be to work your abs, do your resistance training, then cardio, and at that time add in this plank routine. As long as you have 45 minutes rest in between your regular ab workout and this “beach prep” workout, you are good to go.

**The Thinking Behind This Workout:** Muscle tone improves as your mind-to-muscle link improves. The way to improve your mind-to-muscle link is with repeated frequent contractions to a muscle group (without damaging the muscle). Since this is a static contraction, there will be very little damage and this is why you will be able to do this every day. I wouldn't recommend doing this until 21 days before summer or vacation...since this could result in over-training.

**Possible Tweaks:** You can really take this to another level by hitting a plank position a few times per day. Just drop to the floor in the morning, before bed, when you get home for work, etc. You are simply training your abs to contract, to take your muscle tone up a notch. Also...I am not a big fan of training while on vacation, but a few planks in the morning will maintain this high degree of muscle tone. So you could spend 10 minutes in your hotel with this plank routine before applying sunscreen :)

By Rusty Moore

39

Visual Impact Fitness
Chapter 11
Working Around a Back Injury

This chapter is going to be about my personal experiences with training abs around a severe lower back injury. This isn't meant to replace the advice your doctor gives. That being said a lot of doctors and physical therapists are giving advice that does more damage than good. If you have a low back injury I would HIGHLY recommend you pick up “Low Back Disorders” by Stuart McGill.

If you have a back injury, I feel your pain (literally)!

These days my back doesn't hurt at all, but I went through 10+ years of “on and off” back pain. When your back hurts it is tough to find enjoyment in any activity. It really sucks.

If you have back pain, I advise you to avoid the “flexing” movements.
Honestly...you can get pretty darn decent abs with just planks if you get down to a low body fat level. Even with planks, you will need to take it easy if your back pain in bad enough.

The idea is to reinforce good spinal alignment, by challenging the muscles when your spine is in a neutral position. Planks do this perfectly!

**We will also work the spinal muscles directly with gentle exercises.**

I wouldn't recommend jumping straight into hip bridges or back bridges if your spine is injured. You will need to reinforce and stabilize your spinal column for many months before being able to do these more aggressive exercises.

The “Bird Dog” is a great exercise to stabilize the spinal column.

It is pretty easy to do. Get on all four's and then raise your right arm forward and left leg back. Try to form a straight line with your legs, body, and arms. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with the other arm. I used to do 5-10 reps per side about 3 times per week when I was coming back from my back injury.

**Planks + The “Bird Dog”...3 Times Per Week...for 3-6 Months.**

Be extra careful with the planks when you first start. Only hold the position for 20-30 seconds at first then slowly over a period of 4-6 weeks, work up to 2 minutes. As you get stronger add in side planks. Once they feel easy, simply do that “Beach Prep” workout as outlined. Make sure and follow that up with 5-10 minutes of “bird dogs”.

By Rusty Moore

Visual Impact Fitness
The secret behind the Bird Dog exercise.

Although this exercise won't feel like it is doing a lot, it is actually working the small Multifidus Muscles. Why are these muscles important? The Multifidus plays a role in almost all back pain. I learned about how to work the Multifidus in an excellent book called “The Multifidus Back Pain Solution”. It was a recommended book from Amazon when I was ordering Stuart McGill's back injury book, “Low Back Disorders”.

**Warning:** While we are trying to stabilize your spine...Avoid any back flexing movement or stretches that round the lower back. Don't do crunches, leg raises, or any stretches like this...

You can't afford to round the back, coming back from a back injury.

I don't have room to go into why this is the case. Stuart McGill does an excellent job explaining this. If you need to know exactly why to avoid this, then get his book...otherwise trust me and simply avoid these movements. You can thank me later!

By Rusty Moore

Visual Impact Fitness
Chapter 12
Great Abs for Life

I know most who are reading this want great abs “yesterday”. My hope is that you take a more long term approach. I do have some great news for those who are a little more impatient...

You can reach 75% of your genetic potential in abs in 6-12 months.

...but that is only if you follow an ab routine that is centered around the most effective and challenging ab exercises (like in this course). If you follow this course and tweak your routine over time to make it progressively more challenging, you should make a transformation in 6-12 months.

You can still have better abs than most in 3 months.

Don't worry if you need to get fit in a hurry, this program will do the job. I'm just letting you know that amazing, “head turning” abs aren't made over night. In one year you can have better abs than just about anyone you bump into. Give it another 2-3 years and you can reach close to your genetic potential.

Get fit once...and maintain that level for a lifetime!

I view fitness a little different than a lot of people. I believe you only need to work abs really hard...just 1 time in your life. After you master the hardest level of ab workouts I have outlined here, just maintain that strength level. If you never let yourself slide you will never have to worry about becoming soft as you age.

Maintaining abs takes less work than getting them in the first place.

You can maintain your abs on about 2/3 of the work it took to get them. So if
you are working a variation of the “deep abs” workout 3 times per week...you
could probably reduce that to two times. Heck, you could probably maintain
off of less than that.

As you age from 30, 40, 50 and beyond...*Muscle Maturity.*

As you train through the decades your muscle maturity will improve over
time. *This is called muscle maturity and it will improve over time...but only
on muscles that get used.* A great example of this is forearms on a lot of older
guys. A typical 50 year old who has been active his entire life will have much
more forearm definition than a 25 year old who has been active his entire life.

**Although the muscle definition comes easier...so does the body fat!**

Unlike a lot of other guys with fitness courses online, I believe in cardio for
fat loss...(In fact I have a entire book written on strategic cardio for fat loss
that I believe *smokes* circuit training). As you age you will need to focus
more on creating a calorie deficit through diet and exercise. So pay attention
to this more as the decades come at you. Do that and you will be set!

**Final thoughts:** My hope is that you implement what is taught in this course.
I focus on what I've learned over the past 20 years prepping for summers,
vacations, and learning from other men and women with amazing abs. You
have the blueprint...so exceptional abs are just 6-12 months away if you want
it bad enough!

Hope You Enjoyed This :)

-Rusty
Visual Impact Fitness

*Read about why I trashed my popular fitness blog that got over 25+ million visitors...and decided to start over.*