

# Crunch your way to a stronger, tighter midsection

Turn on the TV and you're likely to come across an infomercial trying to sell you the latest product or video guaranteed to flatten and tone your stomach. For just \$29.95 (and up), you too can have a washboard stomach or 'abs of steel.' While there is nothing inherently wrong with most of these products, they are not the panacea manufacturers claim them to be. Recognizing that not everyone can achieve a chiseled midsection, it is possible to develop strong abdominal muscles, thereby strengthening the back, without spending a lot of money. In fact, you can start doing the following exercises right now, free of charge.

## Clearing Up Misconceptions

First of all, let's get something perfectly clear. No amount of crunches or torso twists will get rid of the excess fat that many of us carry around our middles. Regular cardiovascular exercise, on the other hand, will do the trick. And more important than just making us look better, losing fat around the middle is important for keeping the heart healthy.

## Technique Is Everything

The single most important thing you can do to correctly train your abdominals is to use proper form. There are many myths and misconceptions when it comes to abdominal training. Here are some points to remember when performing ab-



dominal exercises.

- Don't pull on the neck during the movement. Keep the chin a fist's distance from your chest.
- Start with the arms across the chest; as your abdominals become stronger, extend the arms behind the head.
- Don't throw the body, or use jerking motions to complete the movement. Keep it slow and controlled.
- Keep the abdominals pulled in by visualizing your navel pressing down toward the floor. Keep your back flat against the floor.
- Always exhale as you contract and inhale as you release.

## Variations Of The Crunch

The best exercise to tone and strengthen the upper abdominals is also the easiest: the basic

crunch. This exercise is performed with knees bent, and back flat on the floor. Raise the chest and shoulders several inches from the ground, exhaling as you come up and inhaling as you release.

To work the obliques, the muscles on the sides of the stomach, perform the crunch at alternating angles, reaching with the shoulder (not the elbow) across the body to the opposite knee. Repeat on the other side.

Finally, to work the lower abdominals, bring the knees up toward the chest, forming a 90 degree angle with the body. Using only the lower abdominals and not the legs or hips, bring the knees slightly toward the chest as you exhale. Return to the starting position. Remember, this is a very small movement. Don't try to bring the knees up to the face.

There are no hard and fast rules as to the number of repetitions you should do of these abdominal exercises. Start with 10 repetitions of each and increase as your abdominals become more conditioned. Twenty-five repetitions of each exercise is a good goal to keep in mind as you train your abdominals. And, with 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise, three times per week, you'll be on your way to a leaner and healthier midsection. *(Courtesy of the American Council on Exercise, a non-profit health and exercise organization.)*

## Sports Line

**No restriction:** Beginning Monday, individuals on the Monitored Fitness Improvement Program will be allowed to utilize the base fitness center for exercising and will no longer be restricted to exercising at the Health and Wellness Center. Those on the MFIP will carry and maintain their own MFIP cards and after exercising will be able to have their MFIP cards documented by either the HAWC or fitness center personnel only. The fitness center hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and holidays from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact the HAWC at 963-4007.

**Smoking cessation:** The Health and Wellness Center will hold a free "Quit Smart" Tobacco Cessation Facilitator Course Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the HAWC.

This one-day train-the-trainer seminar combines a multimedia presentation to show you how to implement and promote a Quit Smart tobacco cessation program for up to 30 people.

Limited seating is available. Course content includes assessing nicotine addiction and coping skills.

To register or for more information call the Health and Wellness Center at 963-4007.

**Catch the Rays:** The South Carolina Stingrays are giving all military members another chance to join the fun of a Stingrays game. Fan Appreciation Night is Saturday, as the Rays take on the Pee Dee Pride. Military members will receive \$2 off each upper bowl I seat plus enjoy free parking for this night. Military members

should show their ID cards at the Coliseum ticket window.

Stop by the Outdoor Rec Center to get Stingray tickets. Tickets are on sale for \$4 and \$7. Don't miss these rock bottom prices. Call the ORC today at 963-5271.

## Intramural standings

### Bowling leagues

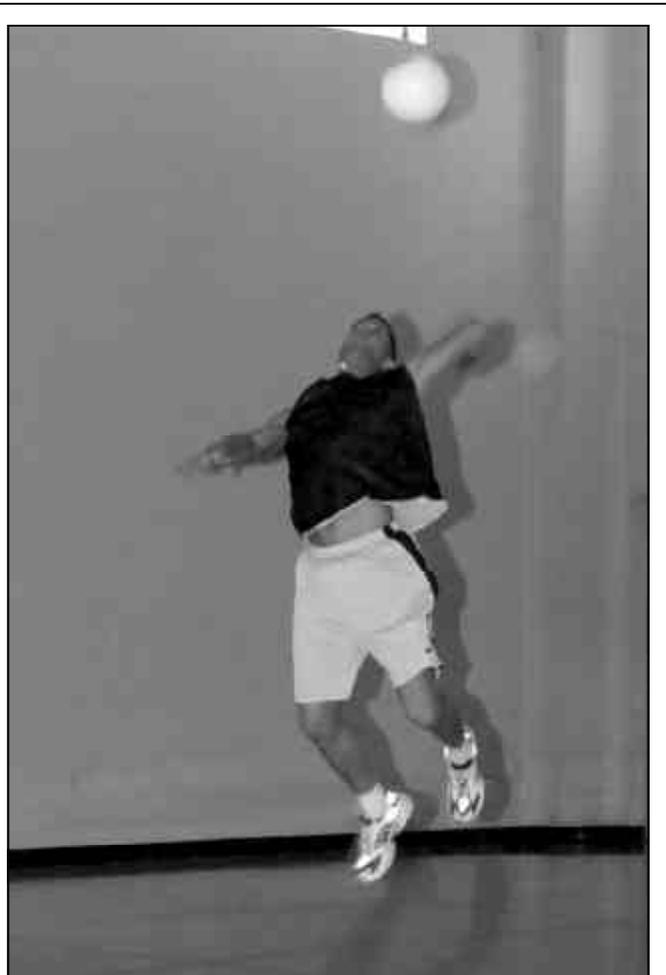
American	National
1. 637 AGS 2	1. CES
2. EMS 4	2. APS
3. 637 AGS 3	3. LSS
4. LGT	4. EMS 2
5. EMS 1	5. 637 AGS
6. APS 2	6. MSS
7. APS 3	7. Comm
8. SVS	8. Det. 3
9. SFS	9. 15 AS
10. 437 OSS	10. EMS 3
11. CTCS	11. CRS
12. APS 4	12. Blind Team

**Bowling championship:** The intramural bowling roll-off to determine the top teams in the American and National leagues is May 1-3 at Starlifter Lanes. Competition will begin each day at 5:30 p.m.

The top five teams from each league will compete, and each league will have a first and second place winner.

### Volleyball

1. 1 <sup>st</sup> CTCS	<b>Racquetball</b>
2. CS/SVS	1. SFS
3. 437 AW	2. 437 AGS 1
4. AGS	3. 437 AW
5. Navy Hosp.	4. 373 TRS
6. SUP	5. CS
7. SFS	6. 1 CTCS
8. 373 TRS	7. CES
9. 15 AS	8. APS
10. CES	9. CRS
11. EMS	10. SUP
12. LGT	11. EMS
13. Med Grp.	12. 437 AGS 2



**Super serve**  
David Deremer of the 1st Combat Camera Squadron volleyball team serves while warming up for a recent game against 437th Medical Group.

Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe