

CORE AND ABS FOR WEIGHT LOSS AND MUSCLE GAIN

Core training is done for 10 minutes after every weight training session. It not only results in the benefits stated below but also allows the body time to slowly decrease its heart rate and cool down.

THE CORE MUSCLES CONSIST OF:

- The abdominal muscles
- The external oblique (at the sides of the abdominals)
- The erector spinae (which extend the back)
- The pelvic floor muscles (below your abdominals)

Core training is necessary as the core area is where all movement in your body originates; it is your centre of gravity as well as the support of the spine. Weak core muscles may be the cause of poor posture, lower back pain and injury.

BENEFITS OF CORE TRAINING INCLUDE:

- Develop core strength and increase stability and improve posture
- Flatten the stomach and development six pack abs
- Tighten the muscles under your love handles
- Cut workout time for ab training
- Increase flexibility
- Superior endurance

Ab training is done prior to Cardio training; this allows you to concentrate on working the abdominal area without having to rely on the peripheral muscles being fatigued due to prior weight training. Ensuring that cardio is done directly after ab/core workouts increases the effectiveness of the ab/core session.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE 2 PHASES OF EACH MOVEMENT - THE ECCENTRIC AND CONCENTRIC OR CONTRACTION AND RELAXATION PHASE. THESE SHOULD BOTH BE DONE SLOWLY WITH CONCENTRATION (2 SEC FOR CONTRACTION AND 3 SEC FOR RELAXATION).

Core				
Exercise	Muscle Group	Sets	Reps	Rest
The Abs, Obliques, Lower Back and Pelvic Floor Muscles				
Bridge with Leg Extension	Erector Spinae	4	4x30 sec	30 sec
Note: Lie flat on your back, hands at your side, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift right leg and straighten it. Lower right leg; raise left leg and straighten it. Continue alternating.				
Standard Bridge	Entire Core	4	2x60 sec	15 sec
Note: Support yourself off of the mat on your toes and forearms. Keep your arms flat on the ground at about mid-chest level. Your back should be straight and your butt down, placing as much effort onto the abs as possible. Hold the position for 60 seconds per set.				
Side Bridge	Entire Core	4	2x30 sec	15 sec
Note: Start by lying on a mat with your legs straight out. Turn sideways holding your body up with one bent arm parallel to the floor. Keep your abs tight for 30 seconds per side, per set.				
3 Inches	Entire Core	4	4x60 sec	15 sec
Note: Lie flat on your back, arms crossed over your chest. Lift your legs 3 inches off the ground. Concentrate on using your abdominal muscles. Hold for 60 seconds per set.				
Abs				
Abs to be done with cardio				
Abs 1	Crunches	3	20	10 sec
Note: Lie flat on the floor (or a mat). Cross your arms over your chest and raise your torso upwards and forwards using your abdominal muscles. Hold each crunch for 3 seconds before returning to the start position				
	Side Crunches	3	15	10 sec
Note: Lie flat on your back, hands at your side, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift right leg and straighten it. Lower right leg; raise left leg and straighten it. Continue alternating.				
	Reverse Crunches	3	20	10 sec
Note: Lie on the floor and place hands behind the head. Bring the knees in towards the chest until they're bent to 90 degrees. Contract the abs to curl the hips off the floor, reaching the legs up towards the ceiling. Lower and repeat for 1-3 sets of 20 reps.				
Abs 2	Seated Flat Bench Leg Pull Ins	4	15	30 sec
Note: Sit on a bench, resting your bodyweight on your buttocks and supporting your upper body by gripping the bench. Legs straight out unsupported in front of you and upper body leaning backwards. Bring your knees and upper body together, concentrating on crunching the core muscles.				
	Hanging Leg Raises	3	10	30 sec
Note: Press your back against the pad and contract the abs to raise the legs and lift knees towards your chest. Don't arch the back or swing the legs up. Slowly lower back down and repeat for 3 sets of 10 reps.				
	Hanging Torso Rotation	3	16	30 sec
Note: Press your back against the pad and contract the abs, raising both knees upwards and to the side. Slowly lower and repeat movement on the other side. Repeat for 3sets of 16 reps.				

Please refer to USN website (www.usn.co.za) for graphics on how these exercises work.