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Ultimate Abs Exercises

Add 4-5 of these moves into your training program three days a week. Choose one exercise from each group if you're a beginner, or 1-2 if you're a more advanced lifter trying to really dial it in.

Group A: Upper Abs and External Obliques

3 sets per exercise, 20-30 reps per set

- Ball pike or ball knee tuck
- Alternating arm raise from plank (I prefer to refer to this as a plank punch and perform it with lightweight dumbbells, no more than 5 lbs. per hand)
- Mountain climbers with feet in suspension strap stirrups
- Mountain climbers with feet on sliders
- Side plank with leg lifts (train each side)
- Seated Russian twists (train each side)
- Overhead med ball slams

Group B: Lower Abs and Internal Obliques

3 sets per exercise, 20-30 reps per set

- Hanging knee raises (increase difficulty by performing hanging windshield wipers)
- Knee/hip raise on parallel bars
- Reverse crunch (increase difficulty by performing on a decline bench, or by adding a DB between the feet)
- Hanging knee raise with oblique twist
- Knee/hip raise on parallel bars with oblique twist

Group C: Total Core Isometric Holds

3 sets per exercise

- Push-up position or elbow plank, hold for 30 sec. to 1 min., depending on ability
- Forearm side plank, hold for 30 sec. per side
- Plank to side plank, alternate sides for 30 sec. apiece, plank/left side plank/plank/right side plank/plank

- Alternating arm raise from plank position, alternating continuously for 30 sec.
- Alternating leg raise from plank position, alternating continuously for 30 sec.
- Alternating arm and leg raise from plank position, pairing opposite leg and arm, raising for 30 sec.
- Alternating arm and leg plank from tabletop (face-up) position, alternating continuously for 30 sec.

Group D: Back Extensions

3 sets per exercise, 20-30 reps per set

- Back extension on exercise ball (perform with weight for increased difficulty)
- Superman (hold for 3 sec., lower and repeat. Do this for 30-45 sec. per set)
- Hyperextension or back extension on 45-degree bench, glute-ham developer, or tabletop with feet held