

CORE TRAINING 101

By Alex Savva, CK, B.P.H.E.

Nowadays, core training is everywhere. Entire infomercials and products are devoted to helping you lose the flab and tone up by concentrating on your core.

So what is the core and how can it help you look more cut and make all your basic movements stronger? Picture the cylinder around your torso. The area from your pelvic floor muscles to your diaphragm makes up your core. A strong core can help you avoid injury while strengthening your entire midsection. That means a bigger squat, more power in your shoulder presses and YES, more muscle!

Don't just do hundreds of crunches and expect a stronger core. While crunches are great to help strengthen your abdominals, you should also integrate movements that involve working the core muscles as a unit. In fact, the majority of your core work should be isometric exercises like front and side planks:

The Plank

Lie face down on an exercise mat with your forearms supporting your upper body. Lift your entire body off the ground, from the balls of your feet to your forearms. Pull your abs in tight, keep your pelvis in neutral and make sure your body is parallel to the floor. Hold for 30-60 seconds. Rest and repeat 3 times.

Side Plank

Lift your body off the ground and balance on one forearm and the side of your foot. Contract your abdominals and keep your

shoulders back. Try to keep your hips in line with the rest of your body. Hold for 30-60 seconds. Rest and repeat 3 times.

Advanced Version: Make this move harder by lifting your top leg up a couple of inches off your supporting leg. **IFM**

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Photos by Joseph Saraceno Model: Alex Savva