

# Shed Fat and Find Your Six Pack Abs

When the weather is cold, everyone layers up in order to keep warm. Layering keeps you covered and easily hides the extra flab and bulges around your midsection.

This extra weight piles on easier in the colder weather than any other time of the year. That's because many people don't enjoy exercising in the cold and it's harder to watch your weight thanks to all of the holiday goodies that lurk around every corner.

But spring and summer always arrive before you know it. If you're not careful, you'll be caught with your winter body at the beach - and you don't want that. Right now is the best time for you to get in shape and give yourself a set of washboard abs that makes everyone else envy you.

If you do it now, your body will be ready just in time for the warm weather. Look at it like you're involved in a specific challenge – like you're training for a marathon or running in one - and you stay steady on the course until you reach the finish line.

## How Long Will It Take to Get Abs?

If someone promises you that you can have a set of six pack abs in a week, you can bet they're not telling you the truth – *unless* you have very little fat to begin with and simply need to tone up very little.

If someone says that you can have them in several months, they may not be telling the truth, either – but that *all* depends on YOU!

Here's why:

*When* you develop your six pack abs is going to depend on you and your effort.

It all has to do with how hard you work out, how determined you are to meet the challenge goals you set for yourself and what kind of shape you're in now.

Someone who's in fairly good shape at the moment and already regularly works out is going to meet that goal a lot faster than someone who's very overweight or someone who has a hit or miss approach to being committed to fitness goals.

The simple truth is that how long the race takes you and how well you do depends on how *you* tackle it. No one can make you a winner in this challenge except you – but you *can* get some help if you follow a specific program like the [Xtreme Fat Loss Diet](#).

If you've decided that you're up for the challenge, the next step is to make a plan and get going.

## **Choose Your Plan of Attack**

First, you need to analyze the current state of your body. Which of these categories do you fit in?

#1 – I can barely pinch an inch – just need to tone up and carve the abs I already see.

#2 – I have a little flab covering my abs, so it needs to get burned off so I can fully see – and cut – my abs.

#3 – I have what's commonly known as a beer belly. Flab doesn't pile up anywhere else except my stomach.

#4 – I'm hefty all over, so this will be a total body fitness challenge, with abs as one of my goals.

It almost sounds backwards to say, but if you're a #1 or #2 body type, then you're going to want to push harder right out of the gate than those who have a longer journey ahead of them.

That's because you're already in pretty good physical shape, so strict nutrition and hardcore workouts won't phase you – and you'll be motivated because you'll see results faster.

The more fat you have to fight, the longer it will take you to see the abs, but you *will* still enjoy seeing the fat melt off of your body, and under the flab, your abs will be toning up.

When you know you have a longer journey ahead, you don't want to burn out by doing too much, too fast. You want to make gradual changes to your lifestyle in the form of exercise and nutrition – so that your body continues to burn calories and strengthen your muscles, but you don't feel worn out trying to achieve lightening fast results.

We're going to go over several things for this challenge, including nutrition, exercises, a men's versus women's approach, and the best equipment to help you get the job done.

## **The Foods You Eat Impact Your Abs**

You might think rushing out and hitting the gym full speed ahead is where you're going to shape your abdomen and produce those six pack abs. Certain exercises are part of the challenge, but there's a part that's equally as important – if not *more* so.

Just like the gym workouts that you do, your kitchen can help you develop six pack abs. In fact, your kitchen can turn out to be your greatest ally to getting the body that you want if you equip it to help you.

You have to have food to live, but most of us give our bodies far more food than it can use. We can easily get out of shape by piling the plates full of food that offers a lot of comfort and pleasure - but doesn't offer much in the way of health and nutrition.

Plus, there are foods that are great at helping you build muscle and those are the foods that you *want* to eat. To get great looking abs, you have to challenge yourself to break free from your old way of thinking.

## **An Ab-Friendly Way of Scheduling Meals**

In the past, you might have stuck to the schedule of eating breakfast, then lunch and having dinner in the evening. You have to forget that way of eating and learn to eat more often.

The key is not necessarily to eat *more* - especially of the wrong foods or quantity - but to eat more often so that you keep your metabolism up and your body can burn the flab hiding your impeccable abs.

Besides keeping your metabolism up, you'll also be making sure that your body is getting enough calories. Not getting enough calories is the number one thing that makes people blow off a healthy way of eating and head for the junk food to quiet that growling stomach.

Eating healthy doesn't mean going hungry - and if you feel hungry while you're working toward getting those abs in shape, you have to change things around so that you get the right amount of food intake.

Your abs being defined and muscular depends on your body having enough fuel. But too many people think working to build ab muscles means they should eat more to build a little bulk muscle.

If you eat right, in a way that fuels your muscles, you're not going to have that hunger battle on your hands. The problem with many people who try to eat six times a day is that they get confused.

They think that eating six times a day means having six nice, big meals. But if you do that, you're going to pack on weight and flab and not even be able to see your abs.

What you have to do is to eat breakfast, and then three hours later, you have a healthy snack. Two hours after your snack, you eat lunch. Three hours later, you have your second snack. Two hours after that, you eat dinner. Three after that, you have your final snack.

None of these snacks should be junk food. They should be lean protein and a carb paired together to help your body perform at maximum levels.

Now keep in mind, with this new schedule of eating, if you're only eating and you're not yet working out those abs, you're going to see the numbers on the scale start to climb.

If it takes you a week to adjust to this new way of eating and you do see that you've gained some, don't feel bad. That initial weight gain will come right off once you hit the exercise routine you need to do.

## **Foods That Help Eliminate Stomach Flab**

There are some foods that can help you build strong muscles and some help with alleviating stress on your muscles after you've had a workout. You'll want to consume plenty of:

- Nuts (almonds are great)
- Beans
- Green vegetables
- Fruits
- Dairy
- Whole grains
- Lean meats
- Eggs
- Peanut butter (a great protein snack)

Switch the oils you use to olive oil - it's better for your health and better for your muscles.

You might hear that you need to eat only low fat carbohydrates when you're working to build your abs, but this is not good advice to follow. Your muscles need carbohydrates - especially after a workout.

So look for carbohydrates that are low on the glycemic index. These include:

- Pasta
- Yogurt
- Sweet potatoes
- Rice - brown
- Oats
- Bran
- Vegetables – leafy greens, etc.
- Fruits – apples, oranges, grapes

The one ingredient you want to look out for is fructose because fructose quickly turns into fat. Don't use carbs that break down quickly - these are carbs that are usually full of sugar.

They can drive your insulin to spike and when your insulin number is higher, your body doesn't burn fat as well. So eat carbs that are slow acting.

The kind of fat that you want to make sure that your diet has is monounsaturated fats, such as:

- Macadamia nuts
- Avocado
- Fish oil

These fats keep your cholesterol level at a healthy range and they're powerful fat burners. Foods that burn fat are important when you're looking to develop a set of six pack abs because they help you deal with the flab and uncover those abs.

Eat fat burning foods like:

- Broccoli rabe
- Brazilian nuts
- Avocados

You want foods that spike your metabolism and keep it revved up throughout the day. You should help your body burn the fat hovering around your midsection – even when you're sitting still.

There are some foods that increase your metabolism just by choosing these foods over others, such as:

- Hot peppers
- Tempeh
- Black beans
- Asparagus
- Edamame
- Spinach

## **Nutritional Tasks**

When it comes to setting your nutrition up for your new fat loss regimen, the lower you are on the scale of needing to burn fat, the fewer changes you need to make. Your body is already mostly peaked for performance.

For those who were in the #1 and #2 category, focus on eliminating any extra junk food calories you can give up. You may not need to make *any* dietary changes, as long as your new workout regimen burns enough fat to showcase a new set of abs.

If you have extra work to do to shed a beer belly or overall body weight, like the #3 and #4 challenge participants, then you'll want to restrict your calories more and make a plan to choose body fueling foods that rev up your metabolism and help you get lean, faster. The guidelines in [Xtreme Fat Loss Diet](#) can help you make firm decisions about your diet plan.

## **Get to Know Your Abs**

Every single person on the planet has abs. But many of these abs are covered up under layers of flab. The amount of fat covering the abdominal muscles depends on how much extra weight you carry in that area.

In order to work on the specific act of carving out the outline of your abs (which is where the term six pack abs stems from), you have to understand where these muscles are and what they do for your body so that you can pinpoint your exercises precisely.

Your abdominals aren't just one muscle, but a set of different ones. Just like you can have layers of fat, you have layers of abdominal muscles. You have the transverse abdominis.

This muscle is located on either side of your abdomen. It runs in a vertical direction. This muscle is a core muscle that acts as support for your back. It's important that you strengthen this muscle.

Next, you have the internal obliques. These muscles work in tandem with your external obliques. They control your movement when you need to bend or turn or twist.

The muscle that's targeted when you want to build six pack abs is called the rectus abdominis. This muscle runs the vertical length of your abdomen and is considered your stabilizing muscle.

When you don't work out your ab muscles, your rectus abdominis will not be defined. When you work it, it becomes defined and gives you that rippled effect that so many people seek.

By now, you know that there's a big difference in the way people can use exercise to shed abdominal fat and bring those abs into focus. This is where the challenge separates those who merely want to lose the belly fat from those who specifically want well-defined ab muscles that look chiseled - because exercise is something you have to stick with in order to see results.

You have to have iron will and determination to keep pushing through until you see your body take shape the way you've visualized it being. We're going to delve into a men's and women's approach for ab exercises, because each gender will have a slightly different plan of attack.

## **Men Who Want Washboard Abs**

To build the abs, you can't ignore the function of all the muscles within the abdomen. That means that looking to ripple up the rectus abdominis is only part of the equation.

You need to strengthen the transverse abdominis, too. Contrary to popular belief, doing sit-ups is not the best way for a man to build his abdominal muscles.

One exercise that you can use to do this is the pelvic tilt using 10/10.

Lie flat on an exercise mat and either put your hands behind your head or place them on your abdomen. With your knees up, raise your butt from the floor and hold it for 10 seconds.

Lower your pelvis to the floor again and repeat this exercise for 10 repetitions. As you're doing this exercise, you want to concentrate on pulling your stomach inward. This tightens your abdominals.

You can also do push ups. With this exercise, you can do the standard method, which also works your triceps. But using an exercising ball can up the intensity of the pushup while making your abdominal muscles work out more.

To do this exercise, you place your feet on the exercise ball as if the ball was the floor. Because the ball will not remain in one spot unless you control it, you're using your abdominal muscles and tightening them both during the pushup and as you control the ball to keep it still.

To create washboard abs, another exercise that will help is to use an overhead bar. While holding the bar, lift both legs together off the floor and hold them straight out for the count of 10. Slowly straighten the legs and repeat.

For the bicycle exercise, which is extremely good for working out the ab muscles, you want to lie flat and put your hands behind your head. Position your legs up as if you'd been sitting in a straight back chair and fell over backward.

Begin moving your legs up and down in a pedal pushing fashion while at the same time, touching each elbow to the opposite knee as it raises.

Exercising using crunches and Swiss ball figure eight movements is also helpful for giving you washboard abs. The challenge is going to be sticking with any new exercise movements until you see results.

But if you can stick with it for two weeks, you'll begin to notice some changes in how your muscles feel before you notice how ripped your abdomen is becoming, so you'll have signs that it's working.

## **Women Who Want Washboard Abs**

It's a fact that losing weight and building abs is often more difficult for women. But let that be a challenge to you to overcome the genetic slight you have. Women must use a healthy eating plan along with exercise and possible weight

training to get rid of the natural fat they can carry in the abdominal area if that's an issue for you.

The key for a woman to get a nice set of ab muscles is to know what type of body shape you have. For example, if you have an apple shape, you're going to want to hit the cardio exercises and make those a big part of your exercise routine.

If you have a slower metabolism and you don't burn fat as easily, you're going to want to concentrate on exercises like push ups, side steps, back arches and the bicycle.

As a woman, you'll want to concentrate on exercises that target your body such as crunches and squats. You'll also want to do leg raises. These are similar to the pelvic tilt for men but you don't want to bend your knees.

Instead, you want to keep your legs straight out and hold them mid-air for a count before slowly bringing them back down.

Seated lifts is an exercise that's very helpful in building abdominal muscles for women. To do this, sit flat on the floor with your ankles crossed. Place your hands beside you and tighten your stomach muscles.

Lift your body up while keeping your ankles crossed. Hold for the count of ten and then lower yourself back to the floor.

All of those are exercises that you can do at home with no additional equipment, but there are some exercise equipment as well as machines that you can use that are helpful.

## **Exercise Equipment for Men and Women**

There are some simple items that you can use at home to build your abdominal muscles. You can use dumbbells, exercise balls or ab rollers. You can also use a kettlebell.

An exercise tubing that you can use to do pulls is also great for building washboard abs. But many people like to have machines at home that they can use to work on their abdominal muscles.

Some of these machines are small and easy to use while some of them are larger and more complex. The ab rocker machine is a good one that you can use at home.

It was created to work only your abdominal muscles - and it stays on target with that goal. Plus, it's easy to keep stored when you're not using it.

An ab crunch machine is great to use at the gym or in a home gym that you design. Some of these do have weight caps. But you can define the weights you lift in certain amounts by what you add and remove. With most of them, you'll have to buy the weights separately.

You can use a decline bench that gives you muscle gain in the abdomen. Another great exercise machine is the ab twist. This machine uses a swivel seat and targets your obliques as well as your rectus abdominis.

Regardless of whether you don't use any equipment, or you use simple or complex equipment, exercise doesn't power itself. You have to be the driving force behind making it work for you.

If you have that determination, then you're ready to start shedding fat and toning your body all over – not just in your ab area. Check out the [Xtreme Fat Loss Diet](#) and see how you can flush fat ad spot reduce while training, too!

