

Abs:

the core of a healthy body



Strong abdominal muscles can do more than just make you look slimmer. Healthy ab muscles can help you improve posture and alleviate back pain. For those who thought ab exercises were only for achieving a “six pack,” it’s time to discover all the benefits of a strong midsection.

Your abdominal muscles are part of the body’s core muscles, which support your entire body when you sit, stand and move. For those who don’t like sit-ups or can’t get on the floor, there are other options to strengthen and tone these important muscles. In fact, “vertical” core exercises may be even more effective than sit-ups.

Try this standing core exercise that’s suitable for beginners:

- Stand facing a wall. Place your feet shoulder-width apart and push your hands against the wall.
- Bend your knee and bring your leg toward the wall. Keep the other foot flat on the floor at all times.
- Step your leg across the other one in front. Then, step the same leg out to the side.

- Bend the knee again and open your leg to the outside, using your hip. Then, swing the leg to the inside.

Repeat these exercises with the other leg. Concentrate on keeping your abs tight each time you lift and move your leg. Try to repeat them several times, and increase the number of reps as you get stronger.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine