

10

POUNDS DOWN

CARDIO ABS

THE GREAT ABS GUIDE

CARDIO ABS DVD BONUS:
YOUR GUIDE TO GETTING
(AND KEEPING) FAB ABS!

BY **JESSICA SMITH**

INCLUDES:

- Eating for Abs Guide & Customizable Meal Plan
- 6-Week Great Abs Workout Schedule
- Bonus Tips to Banish Belly Bloat & More!





Welcome!

Thanks so much for checking out our Great Abs Guide! We've put together tons of tips, eating advice and recipes to help you make the most out of your results with our Cardio Abs DVD. (And if you don't have the DVD yet, please be sure to check it out! It's available on our [website](#)).

I am fighting belly flab just like every other woman out there, and this program is a compilation of all the things I have found that have worked for me and many of my clients. Along my fitness journey, I've interviewed tons of experts, done lots of research and tried and tested numerous techniques myself in order to find out what works, and what doesn't, and I continue to find out new things every day.

Please feel free to contact me with questions, or drop me a note and let me know how this worked for you! We'd love to feature your success with our program on our website and in upcoming publications, so feel free to send us your story by visiting us online at www.10poundsdown.com.

Here's to a healthy, strong and sexy abs - all year round!

Your friend in fitness,

Jessica Smith

The Great Abs Guide by Jessica Smith

©2012 In Wellness Systems LLC,
All Rights Reserved.
Published April 2012

All rights reserved. No portion of this manual may be reproduced in any form or by any mechanical or electronic means without the written permission of the author, except by a reviewer who quotes brief passages in connection with a review for newspaper, magazine, newsletter or media.

Photos: Shutterstock.com



Introduction

The quest for great abs seems never ending... we're spending millions each year on diet products, abs circles, electric shock belts -- anything that promises to give us those flat, taut abs we're after. And while having a sexy stomach is a nice motivator, the truth is, flattening out your belly isn't just a superficial goal. In fact, excess belly fat can be an indicator of a host of other [health problems](#) (including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer) so striving to slim down your waistline is a really good idea.

Six pack abs are fab, but your primary goal should be to keep your waist in check in order to stay healthy and vital. To get started, measure the circumference of your waist (placing the tape measure right at belly button level) and write down the number (or type it into your iphone) along with today's date (medical experts recommend women have a waist circumference of no more than 35 inches, men, no more than 40 inches). Take your measurements again at the end of our 6-week plan, and then send us your results! We love hearing from you, so be sure to let us know how you did with the program and how we can help you continue to reach your goals. (In fact, we may just feature your success story in our upcoming Abs Book!) You can submit your story at www.10poundsdown.com.

Regardless of where you are starting from today, we want to help you reach your all your abs-focused goals. Our Cardio Abs guide was designed to help you sport a healthy, swimsuit ready stomach – all year round.



Eating for Abs Guide

While genetics play a role, and exercise is important, experts agree that diet is crucial when it comes to great abs. In fact, it's so vital that many experts say what you eat determines anywhere from 70-90 percent of your outcome. So does that mean you are destined to eat only celery and carrot sticks for the rest of your life if you want flat abs?

Absolutely not! With this guide, we'll tell you the best (and worst) foods out there for flat abs, give you some quick tricks to beat belly bloat, and provide you with a mix and match eating plan that you can follow daily, or use to create your own.

And finally, remember, it's all a matter of what you can be happy with. If you really, really want a washboard, six-pack stomach, then be prepared to make some sacrifices for it (unless you are genetically blessed with great abs, in which case you probably don't need us). If you can be content with flat, toned and strong abs (though maybe not ripped) then you can have some more leeway with your diet. But no matter what you decide is right for you, don't forget to keep it all in perspective and balance – while six pack abs are nice, life is meant to be enjoyed too, without having to obsess over every calorie.

EATING FOR ABS GUIDELINES

Our plan is centered on a daily intake of 1,500 calories. We recommend dividing your calories up by meal – aiming for a breakfast that is 300 calories (or less), lunch of 400 calories (or less) and a dinner of 500 calories (or less), which leaves you with 300 ‘bonus’ calories that you may choose to divide up into 2, 150-calorie snacks, add in as a dessert or a few drinks on a special night.

If you decide to follow the customizable meal plan, you won’t need to count calories if you choose one of our options at meal times, and you’ll decide how you want to use your ‘leftover’ 300 calories easy day. We’ve also included some restaurant options in case you get stuck having to grab some food on the go (though we highly recommend making your own meals as often as possible to help control your exact calorie count and help keep your sodium intake low – translation: reduce belly bloat).

THE SINGLE, MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO TO LOSE WEIGHT, FEEL BETTER AND REDUCE BELLY FAT IS...

If following a more regimented eating plan just isn’t for you, you may want to focus on the single, most important step you can take to changing your diet for health, wellness and, of course, fab abs: **eating a diet that is rich in fruits, veggies and as many whole, unprocessed foods as possible**. This becomes increasingly important if you are reducing your calorie intake for weight loss. “Losing weight isn’t all about cutting calories. The brain looks for nutrients, not calories,” says Dr. Mehmet Oz, a cardiothoracic surgeon, author, and host of the Dr. Oz Show. In fact, Dr. Oz says the quickest way to lose weight is to cut out empty refined calories like those found in white bread, pasta and rice. This means ditch the ‘diet foods’ – just because a label has ‘fat free’, ‘low fat’ or ‘whole grain’ on it, doesn’t mean it’s a food you should be eating!





DOES THAT MEAN YOU CAN'T SPLURGE NOW AND THEN?

Of course not! In fact, it may help you lose weight - one recent University of Illinois at Chicago study found that people eating 25 percent fewer calories every other day lost up to 30 pounds in only eight weeks. Make it work for you by taking in 1,200-1,500 calories one day, and then eating as you normally do the next.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE DELICIOUS, SINFUL 'CHEAT' FOODS – ARE THEY OK?

Here's the deal: as soon as you tell yourself that you can't eat that mouth-watering bagel, chocolate cake, muffin (whatever makes you salivate) it's all you will think about until you dive head first into a full cake, box of cookies, etc. Well, we've got some good news for you – adding in your 'cheat' food to your diet on a daily basis may actually help you slim down your belly for good! A recent study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that women who were served their favorite mac-n-cheese meal every day for five days, five weeks in a row, ate less and less of it, and actually consumed about 100 calories less than those who only ate it twice, one week apart (those women actually ate more of it the second time it was served). Why? It seems that consuming formerly off-limits foods may help lessen their appeal, curb cravings (and major diet binges) to slim down your belly permanently. So try eating a small amount of your 'trigger' food daily. Knowing that you can eat it again the next day could help you eat less.

The Customizable Meal Plan

Our 1,500 calorie meal plan was created by Margaux J. Rathburn, a certified nutritional therapy practitioner and owner of [Authentic Self Wellness](#), to help you eat balanced, healthy (and tasty!) abs-friendly meals. You can mix and match options on a daily basis depending on your preferences and needs. Our meals can also be used as a guideline to help you start to gauge portion sizes, and ingredients to help you reduce the calories in your favorite dishes. If there is an ingredient used that you don't have on hand (or simply don't like) feel free to swap or substitute similar options. And if a meal leaves you hungry, feel free to include a little more food – that is part of what those 300 discretionary calories are meant for.

Please note: *if you are very active, or not trying to lose weight, this number may be too low for you, so feel free to include an extra snack or boost your portion size up if you feel you aren't getting enough calories for what your body needs.*



Breakfasts (300 calories or less)

GOOD MORNING FRUIT KABOBS

- 1 banana, peeled and sliced into bite-sized pieces
- 1/2 of a red delicious apple, sliced into bite-sized pieces
- 4 fresh organic strawberries
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt

Thread the banana, apple slices, and strawberries onto bamboo skewers. Drizzle lemon juice over fruit pieces. Serve with a side of plain yogurt for dipping skewers.



Abs Bonus:



Eating a diet rich in the soluble fiber (the kind found in apples, strawberries and bananas) can have a direct effect on reducing belly fat, says a new study by researchers at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. The study, the first to directly link dietary fiber with decreased abdominal fat, found that for every 10 grams of daily dietary soluble fiber, abdominal fat was reduced by 3.7 percent over a five-year period. And another Brazilian study found that women who ate three apples or pears per day lost more weight while dieting than women who did not eat fruit while dieting.

SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH TOMATO AND BASIL

- 2 large eggs
- 1 tbsp. milk
- 1/8 tsp. sea salt, coarsely ground
- Pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup mozzarella cheese, grated
- 2 Tbsp. fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tsp. butter
- 1 tomato, sliced

In a bowl, whisk eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Add cheese and 1 tbsp. basil. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add egg mixture and let set for 20 seconds. Cook for about 3 minutes, stirring, until eggs are light and fluffy. Top with sliced tomato and remaining basil.

Abs Bonus:

“Eggs are a good source of protein, vitamins A and D, zinc, and iron, and tomatoes are low in calories and high in potassium,” says Vicario. Not only do eggs help balance your blood sugar, they may help you stay fuller, longer which can aid in weight loss. One study found that subjects who ate two eggs for breakfast lost 65 percent more weight (and had more energy) than those who started the morning with an equally caloric bagel.





EGG-WHITE OMELET WITH GOAT CHEESE AND SALSA

- 3 egg whites
- 2 tbsp. water
- Sea salt to taste
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1.5 ounces goat cheese, crumbled
- 14.5 ounce can whole peeled tomatoes, drained
- 1/2 of a red onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded
- 1/2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 tbsp. fresh cilantro, minced
- 1 clove garlic, peeled

To make the Salsa:

In a food processor, combine tomatoes, onions, pepper, vinegar, cilantro, garlic, cumin, and sea salt. Process until chunky. Transfer to a bowl.

To make the Omelet:

Whisk egg whites with water and season with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tsp. oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add half the egg-white mixture and cook, pulling in eggs from edges to allow runny parts to run underneath. Cook for about 3 minutes, or until eggs are set. Top with half the cheese and salsa. Gently slide omelet onto a plate.

Abs Bonus:



“Onions are a good source of dietary fiber which is important good digestive health,” Vicario says. “When we are digesting our foods, we don’t feel fat and bloated because we are absorbing all of the nutrients.” The best way to keep things running (and digesting) smoothly is to eat a diet rich in fruits and veggies and other whole, unprocessed foods.

AVOCADO SUNRISE

- 1/2 of a large avocado
- 1 tbsp fresh salsa
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Cut avocado in half. Remove the pit and lay the two halves facing upwards. With a spoon, fill the center hole with salsa (see recipe on page 10 to make your own). Squeeze lemon juice over avocado and sprinkle with sea salt and pepper to taste.



Abs Bonus:

Foods rich in 'healthy' monounsaturated fats (like the kind found in avocados) can be more effective for losing weight, and keeping it off. One study found that when more than 300 obese subjects followed either a low-carb, low-fat or a diet rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, all lost weight but only the high 'healthy' fat dieters maintained their weight loss after a two year period, while the other groups regained their weight. Another bonus? Avocados are high in fiber – one medium avocado packs in 10 grams of belly-busting soluble fiber.

Abs Bonus:

Kefir is a great source of probiotics, which research shows may help you reduce belly fat faster. One 2012 study published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that subjects who consumed probiotics for 12 weeks reduced their belly fat by 4.6 percent and an lost an average of 5.8 centimeters of visceral (or abdominal) fat than those that didn't take the supplements. And even more studies show that consuming probiotics through foods (like Kefir) can be more beneficial than supplements, which can be less effective.

GINGER ORANGE SMOOTHIE WITH KEFIR

- 1 orange, peeled
- 1 tsp. freshly grated ginger
- 1 tbsp. flax seed oil
- 1 cup plain kefir

Add all ingredients to your blender and process until smooth. Pour into a tall glass and serve. Enjoy!



DINING OUT OPTION:

STARBUCKS SPINACH AND FETA BREAKFAST WRAP

Grab this delicious vegetarian wrap that's packing 19 grams of protein, for only 290 calories and 10 grams of fat (3.5 saturated).



Lunch (400 calories or less)

CITRUS POMEGRANATE SALAD

- 1 English cucumber, halved, seeded, and cut into cubes
- 2 oranges, one peeled and one juiced
- 1/2 red onion, sliced
- 1 pomegranate, seeds only
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar
- 2 tsp. agave nectar
- 1/4 cup mint leaves, finely chopped
- 1 cup of fresh spinach leaves

For the Salad Dressing:

In a separate bowl, mix garlic, orange juice, rice vinegar, agave nectar, and mint leaves.

For the Salad:

Separate orange slices into wedges and slice each one lengthwise. Combine onion, orange wedges, and pomegranate seeds. Pour the dressing over salad and toss until all ingredients are evenly coated. Serve and enjoy on a bed of spinach leaves..

Abs Bonus:

You can beat belly bloat with cucumbers, says Vicario. "They are a great source of vitamin C and a phytonutrient called caffeic acid, which prevents water retention."

SWISS CHARD AND POTATO SOUP

(Serves four)

- 5 cups of chicken stock
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 lb fresh Swiss chard
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Combine chicken stock with potatoes in a large pan and bring to boil. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 5 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove stems from Swiss chard and add to pan. Simmer and cover for about 3 minutes. Stir in sour cream and Parmesan cheese. Transfer contents of pan to a food processor in several batches until mixture is smooth. Return mixture to pan and heat for one minute. Let cool and serve.



Abs Bonus:

Potatoes are a great source of potassium, which helps to regulate the fluid balance in your body and can help reduce water retention, making this a super-slimming soup.



SIMPLE MISO SOUP WITH MUSHROOMS

(Serves four)

- 3 tbsp. miso paste
- 3 fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 4 ounces organic tofu, diced
- 1 scallion, green part only, sliced
- 5 cup boiling water

Mix boiling water and miso in a pan. Add the mushrooms and let simmer for 5 minutes. Evenly place tofu pieces into serving bowls. Ladle in the soup and add onions on the top. Serve and enjoy!

Abs Bonus:

This soup will help fuel your abs workouts! "Tofu is a good concentrated source of high-quality protein and iron, two nutrients that are important to include in our diet, especially if you work out," says Vicario.



GRILLED LEMONGRASS BEEF SKEWERS

(Serves four)

- 1/2 lb sirloin beef, organic and grass-fed
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemongrass, chopped
- 1 tbsp. garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. shallots, chopped
- 2 tbsp. fish sauce
- 1 tsp. tamari sauce
- 1/2 tsp. sesame oil

Slice beef into thin strips, about 2 inches long. Combine lemongrass, shallots, fish sauce, tamari sauce, and sesame oil in a food processor and blend until smooth. Transfer mixture to bowl and add beef. Toss to coat evenly. Let sit in refrigerator for about 1 hour. Thread beef onto skewers. Grill skewers for 1-2 minutes on each side. Serve and enjoy!

DINING OUT OPTION:

PANERA BREAD: ASIAN SESAME CHICKEN SALAD (WITHOUT WONTONS)

Order this yummy Asian style salad (sans the wonton strips) for a filling mid-day meal that packs in 30 grams of energizing protein for 310 calories and 18 grams of fat (2.5 grams saturated).

Dinner (500 calories or less)

LEMON PEPPER ROSEMARY CHICKEN

(Serves four)

- cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil (to coat dish)
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 1/2 pound chicken breast
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 1 tsp. dried rosemary
- 1 tbsp. Parmesan cheese, grated



Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly grease casserole dish and spread onions on bottom. Place chicken breasts on top, bone side facing down. Sprinkle chicken with pepper, lemon zest, rosemary, and Parmesan cheese. Bake, uncovered, for about 1 hour or until chicken is cooked thoroughly.

BROWN RICE STUFFED BELL PEPPERS

(Serves four)

- 4 green bell peppers
- 1 cup of cooked brown rice
- 1 lb ground organic turkey meat
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 1 can diced tomatoes, drained
- Tomato sauce (enough to cover the bottom of a casserole dish)
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Cut peppers in half lengthwise and discard seeds along with membranes. Cover the bottom of a baking dish with a thin layer of tomato sauce. Place peppers in dish and set aside. Add safflower oil to pan and cook the onions for about 5 minutes or until translucent. Add garlic and cook for 2 more minutes. Add turkey and cook until meat is brown. In a separate bowl, combine the cooked turkey, brown rice, and tomatoes. Add sea salt and pepper to taste. Put this mixture inside of each bell pepper. Bake, covered, for 35 minutes. Before serving, sprinkle some mozzarella cheese on top.





ROASTED PINE NUT LEMON SALMON OVER SPINACH

(Serves four)

- 1/4 cup pine nuts, roasted
- 1/4 cup raisins
- The juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 4 salmon fillets (approx. 5 oz. each), skinless
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
- 2 tbsp. cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil
- 5 cup fresh spinach leaves

Bring 3/4 cup water to a boil. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Spread pine nuts on a baking sheet and roast for about 7 minutes. They will be ready when they are a light golden brown. Remove from sheet and set aside. Add raisins and lemon zest in a small-bowl. Cover with boiling water and set aside. Place salmon seasoned with sea salt and pepper on baking sheet. Bake in oven for about 10 minutes until cooked thoroughly. Drain and discard the liquid from raisins and lemon zest. Add lemon juice, pine nuts, parsley, and oil. Season with sea salt and pepper and stir ingredients to combine. On four serving plates, create a bed of spinach. Place salmon fillets on spinach beds and top with the lemon relish.

Abs Bonus:

Parsley is a natural diuretic, so eat this lean protein rich meal right before a big event to help reduce belly bloat.

CHICKEN BURGERS

(serves six)

- 1 lb ground chicken
- 1/2 cup red pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup red onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. tamari
- 1 cup ground oatmeal

Preheat oven to 350. Mix all ingredients together. Add pepper to taste. Divide mixture into 6 patties and place on baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes on each side. Serve on your favorite whole-wheat buns.

Abs Bonus:

Thyme is a helpful herb for soothing bloating and irritable bowel syndrome, says Vicario.





JERK CHICKEN WITH CHUNKY MANGO SALSA

(Serves four)

- 2 tbsp. Jamaican jerk seasoning
- 1 tbsp. sesame oil
- 1 tbsp. tamari sauce
- 1 tbsp. organic apple cider vinegar
- 1 lime (juiced)
- 2 lbs skinless chicken breasts, halved
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 1 organic mango, ripened
- 1 organic English cucumber, diced
- 1/4 cup organic green bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup red onion, diced
- The juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp. cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp. rice vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh organic cilantro, chopped

Place the jerk seasoning in a large zip-bag or Mason jar. Add the oil, tamari sauce, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, and lime juice. Seal bag or jar and shake to blend all ingredients. Add the chicken and coat with marinade. Refrigerate for at least 8 hours or overnight. In a small bowl, combine corn, mango, cucumber, tomatoes, pepper, onion, lemon juice and zest, olive oil, vinegar, garlic

powder, red pepper, salt, and cilantro. On a grill, cook marinated chicken over medium heat for 5-7 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Cook until the chicken is browned on each side, coating with extra marinade. Place cooked chicken breasts on plate and top with salsa.

Abs Bonus:

"Studies have shown that the seeds of cilantro (coriander) help stimulate the secretion of insulin and lower blood sugar levels," says Vicario.

DINING OUT OPTION:

APPLEBEE'S SIZZLING ASIAN SHRIMP AND BROCCOLI

Pick this sizzling dish when it's time to order, and you'll get 28 grams of protein for only 470 calories and 9 grams of fat (2 grams saturated). Just try to not to order this (or any other entrée at most restaurants) too often – it still packs in over 3,000mg of belly bloating sodium.

5 Bikini Friendly Beverages

So what should you drink with your meals? While water is your belly's best friend, we understand that there are times when that gets well, boring. Here are 5 bikini friendly beverages you can indulge in without worry:

LEMON (OR LIME) INFUSED WATER

Lemons and limes are natural diuretics that can help you slim down. We love sparkling water with a fresh lime (or lemon) squeezed in.

COFFEE

As long as you don't spoil it with tons of heavy creamer or top it with whipped cream, coffee is actually a great beverage for your belly. A cup of Joe offers energy boosting caffeine, helps reduce water retention and is packed with antioxidants - all for zero calories. Plus, new research shows that moderate consumption (3-4 cups a day) can help improve your mood, concentration and reduce your risk of diabetes and some types of cancer.

GREEN TEA

Not only does this tea offer some hydrating benefits, but its really good for you too. "It contains the highest concentration of the powerful antioxidant catechins, and studies show green tea may help lower risk for some cancers," says Dr. Oz. (The jury is still out on whether or not it can actually boost your metabolism though).



'SKINNY' COCKTAILS

Yes, there are times when you want to have a little fun, but that doesn't mean you have to blow all of your hard work! If you want to enjoy a few drinks, custom order them (or make them yourself) with lighter ingredients (like sparkling wine or seltzer) so they won't break the calorie bank. (We love this list of [50 Healthy, Low-Cal Cocktail Recipes for the Aspiring Skinny Girl](#)).

MILK

As long as you don't have any dairy sensitivities, research shows that dairy may help slim your belly. One 2011 Canadian study found that women who followed a high protein, high dairy diet, lost the most weight (when compared to women following a more moderate protein/dairy diet) and actually gained 1.5 pounds of lean muscle (the other groups lost muscle) over 12 weeks.

And the 5 worst beverages for your belly?

ALL SODAS (INCLUDING DIET)

Not only does this drink contain belly-bloating carbonation, but the diet version also contains artificial sweeteners, which can wreak havoc in your digestive tract, leading to a slew of health problems – the least of which is excess bloating. And regular soda? Forget it. Save your empty calories for something good (chocolate, anyone?)

ENERGY DRINKS

Most energy drinks are no better than soda or diet soda when it comes to their nutritional profile, and you'll run into the same bloating problems. If you really do need a lift, we recommend caffeinated tea or coffee instead-- you'll get the boost you need from caffeine plus the extra diuretic benefit, along with a healthy dose of antioxidants to boot.

FRUIT JUICE

Many juices contain tons of excess sugar, and some even contain artificial sweeteners. Most nutrition experts agree that you are better off eating the actual fruit instead – you'll get the added slimming (and filling) bonus of soluble fiber plus all the vitamins and minerals - for less calories.

BEER

There is a reason the term 'beer belly' is not exactly a compliment! Not only will beer bloat your belly fast, it's also a serious source of calories (many 12 ounce beers contain 200 calories or more). If you are a fan of beer, order a light one instead, and stick to one or two – max.

FROZEN DRINKS, WINE COOLERS, ETC.

Consider these drinks as calorie heavy as a dessert. 'Fun' alcoholic drinks can range anywhere from 200 to a whopping 900 calories per drink! Stay slim by ordering up a skinny margarita or wine spritzer instead.



Cardio Abs: 6 Week Workout Schedule

Following this periodized, progressive weekly workout schedule (along with our eating for abs guide) will help you get the best results possible with our Cardio Abs DVD.

Below is your recommended weekly workout schedule (don't be overwhelmed by looking at it all at once – just take the plan week by week, day by day). Be sure to listen to your body at all times, and if a suggested workout is too intense, shorten it or otherwise modify it to your fitness level. Feel free to do more than what is listed, and if you prefer to change the order of your workout days (i.e. you prefer your rest day be Monday instead) feel free to mix up your routine layouts. And, keep in mind, you can always choose to break up your sessions – for example, you can do your 20 minute cardio routine in the morning, and then do your sculpt routine in the evening, if you prefer.

To supplement the workouts on our Cardio Abs DVD (and speed up your weight loss), we'll ask you to include some additional cardio time on your own, and have provided you with a few additional bonus workouts available free online to help you mix things up. Beginners, you will want to stay on the shorter end of the session length for your stand-alone cardio, and when you feel ready, increase the duration (and/or intensity) of your sessions. Power walking, jogging, cycling, hiking or swimming are all great options. (And feel free to add more strength training workouts to your personal plan if you like).

Most importantly, don't forget to maintain a balance with your weekly routine. We've made sure each week includes one day of rest, which can mean a light gentle walk, stretching session or simply a full day "off" for your body. Doing too much can actually be just as detrimental to your progress as not enough, so be sure not to overdo it.

Finally, post this page somewhere you'll see it on a daily basis, gold stars for completed workouts are highly recommended!



Cardio Abs: 6 Week Workout Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK ONE						
Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio activity	Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite core focused workout	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio activity	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Cardio Fun (45-60 Minutes) Do up to 60 minutes of your favorite cardio activity today.	Rest or Breathe, Stretch & Relax (20 Minutes)
WEEK TWO						
Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio, followed by a 20-30 minute core focused workout	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Cardio Fun (45-60 Minutes) Do up to 60 minutes of your favorite cardio activity today.	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine, plus 5 Minute Abs	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Bonus Tabata workout (optional) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio activity	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine, plus 5 Minute Abs	Rest or Breathe, Stretch & Relax (20 Minutes)
WEEK THREE						
Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine + plus 5 Minute Abs	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) + -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio, followed by a 20-30 minute core focused workout	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs + Bonus Tabata workout (optional) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine + plus 5 Minute Abs	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Beach Body Pilates (20 Minutes) + -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio, followed by a 20 minute core focused workout	Cardio Fun (45-60 Minutes) Do up to 60 minutes of your favorite cardio activity today	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + Bonus Tabata workout (optional) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Rest or Breathe, Stretch & Relax (20 Minutes)

Cardio Abs: 6 Week Workout Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK FOUR						
Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio activity	Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite core focused workout	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio activity	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Cardio Fun (45-60 Minutes) Do up to 60 minutes of your favorite cardio activity today	Rest or Breathe, Stretch & Relax (20 Minutes)
WEEK FIVE						
Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) + -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio, followed by a 20-30 minute core focused workout	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + Bonus Tabata workout (optional) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Cardio Fun (45-60 Minutes) Do up to 60 minutes of your favorite cardio activity today. + Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) -or- Beach Body Pilates (20 Minutes)	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine + plus 5 Minute Abs	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Bonus Tabata workout (optional) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio activity	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine + Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) -or- Beach Body Pilates (20 Minutes)	Rest or Breathe, Stretch & Relax (20 Minutes)
WEEK SIX						
Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs + Bonus Tabata workout (optional) -or- your favorite 30 minute total body sculpting routine + plus 5 Minute Abs	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Concentrated Abs (26 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio, followed by a 20-30 minute core focused workout	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs -or- your favorite 30 minute total body sculpting routine + 30 minutes of cardio, plus 5 Minute Abs	Cardio Abs (28 Minutes) + Beach Body Pilates (20 Minutes) -or- 20-30 minutes of your favorite cardio, followed by a 20 minute core focused workout	Cardio Fun (45-60 Minutes) Do up to 60 minutes of your favorite cardio activity today.	Total Body Abs Transformer (28 Minutes) + 5-Minute Abs + Bonus Tabata workout (optional) -or- your favorite 20-30 minute total body sculpting routine	Rest or Breathe, Stretch & Relax (20 Minutes)



FREE Bonus Online Workouts:

BREATHE, STRETCH & RELAX (20 MINUTES)

Flexibility and relaxation are two key components of any fitness and weight loss plan. Take a little time out and give your body some TLC with this calming, relaxing stretch session.

BEACH BODY PILATES (20 MINUTES)

This concentrated Pilates Mat series uses a hand towel to maximize your beach body results. Best for those with some previous Pilates experience.

5-MINUTE ABS (5 MINUTES)

Five minutes is all you'll need to feel the burn with this quick, efficient circuit of moves designed to work your abs from every angle.

DVD WORKOUTS:

CARDIO ABS (28 MINUTES)

This non-stop cardio kickboxing inspired routine will have you punching, twisting and sweating away calories while continuing to work your abs.

TOTAL BODY ABS TRANSFORMER (28 MINUTES)

This total body strength & cardio interval workout uses a set of heavy dumbbells and a mat to build metabolically active lean muscle mass so you can burn fat faster. Beginners, we recommend using a set of 3-5 lb weights for this, and intermediate to advanced level exercisers can start out with 8 pounds or more.

CONCENTRATED ABS (26 MINUTES)

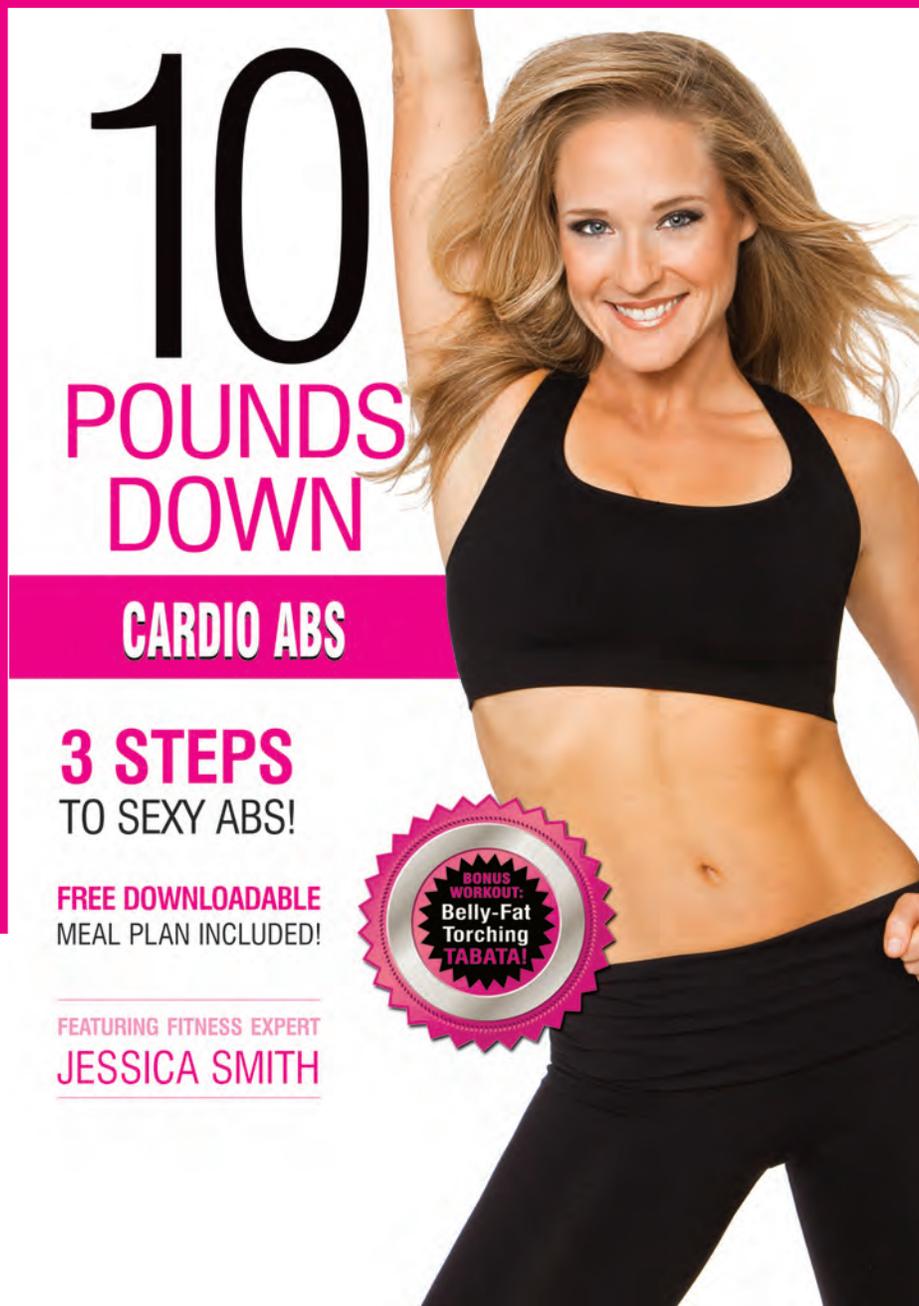
This abs-focused routine combines both standing and floor work to target your waistline from every possible angle.

BONUS WORKOUT:

TUMMY TORCHING TABATA (4 MINUTES)

Tabata interval training is a super effective and fast way to torch fat and calories in minimal time. Do this 4-minute, maximum intensity interval routine as a big finish after a workout or by itself on those days you just don't have time to squeeze in a full routine.

Get your Great Abs
Workout Plan available now on
Amazon.com



The 7 Best Things You Can Do For Your Abs

In addition to your workouts, there are a few more things you can do to help slim down your stomach:

GET MORE SLEEP

Numerous studies have linked not getting enough sleep to weight gain, which will prevent you from seeing those six-pack abs. Not getting enough Zzzz's can affect your blood sugar, your hunger hormones, and even the rate at which you burn calories throughout the day. In fact, one 2005 study published in the journal *Sleep* found that people who averaged 6 hours of sleep were 27% more likely to be overweight than those who slumbered for 7 to 9 hours. And those who only slept 5 hours were 73% more likely to be overweight. Aim to get 7-9 hours of quality sleep every night.



DRINK WATER & EAT PLENTY OF WATER-RICH FOODS

One of the best ways to reduce belly bloat is by actually introducing more water into your diet. And while the exact amount of water you should be drinking can vary, and is based on a number of factors including your environment, body weight, activity level, etc. The [Mayo Clinic](#) recommends drinking enough fluids so that you rarely feel thirsty, and says that if your urine is colorless or light yellow, you are probably sufficiently hydrated. And you don't just have to chug gallons of water – most fruits and veggies (which you should be eating plenty of) are about 90 percent or more water by weight, and even the coffee, tea or milk you drink counts towards your daily totals.

DRASTICALLY REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PROCESSED FOODS FROM YOUR DIET

This is probably the easiest way to drop pounds and inches fast. Most people find that when they switch to eating a diet absent in processed foods (like the kinds that come in a box, bag or other container) they don't have to worry about counting calories any more, and the pounds fall off. Look for sources of high quality nutrition – most natural foods are high in nutrients and low in calories, while processed foods are the exact opposite, which is why our bodies crave them so often and in such large amounts. Get creative about dressing up fruits & veggies to make them more appealing, and try to limit your processed food intake to 0-15 percent of your daily diet.

RELAX MORE

Chronic stress causes your body to produce excess levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which can affect the balance of hormones in your body and has been directly linked to increased levels of belly fat. Balance out a busy schedule with plenty of quality relaxation time –

and we don't mean just plopping down on the couch to zone out with the remote. Find activities that allow your mind and body to completely relax, such as meditation, breathing exercises, Qi Gong or Tai Chi.

PRACTICE THE DRAWING-IN MANEUVER

You can do the 'drawing-in maneuver' anywhere – try it while you wait in line, drive to work and during your workouts (especially during abs and weight training exercises). To do it, pull your belly button in towards your spine, bracing your abs from the front and the back, and hold it in as long as you can (without holding your breath or 'sucking in' your stomach). This really engages your abdominal wall and helps build functional strength your abdominals need in order to avoid that 'pooching' or distended effect that can occur with abs exercises that can be done improperly.

CURB YOUR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

You don't have to give up alcohol completely if you enjoy a few drinks now and then, but alcoholic beverages are an easy way to rack up empty calories fast. Beer, frozen or blended drinks and even too many glasses of wine can easily tack on an extra 500-1,000 calories to your daily intake. If you want to enjoy a few drinks, order them skinny or make them yourself, and stick with one or two to overdoing it.

MAKE YOUR OWN MEALS

Sure, eating out is fun and social, but it's also a very easy way to blow all your hard work in one sitting. Even with the 'lighter' options available on menus nowadays, if you check the nutrition information, most items still contain very high levels of belly bloating sodium. The best way to stay lean and healthy is to prepare most (if not all) of your meals at home so you know exactly what is in your food, and better control your portion sizes.

The Dreaded 'Pooch' Belly: Why You Have It, And How to Get Rid Of It



While we agree that anatomically, there is no such thing as 'lower' abs, there definitely is a condition commonly known as 'pooch belly,' or a disconnect between the upper, more developed part of the abdominal wall, and the lower half of it.

WHY THIS HAPPENS

"Most muscles have two sources of innervation [or areas of distribution of nerve fibers which cause them to fire], while the abdominals have NINE," says [Andrew Johnston](#), a corrective holistic exercise kinesiologist and owner of Triumph Training. The last two (from your belly button down) are the iliohypogastric nerve and the ilioinguinal nerve, which together forms the area that fires up what is known as the 'lower abs,' explains Johnston. "Most people have excellent upper abdominal function from years of sit ups, crunches, and leg lifts, and in contrast, the lower abdominals are often fast asleep – even in those who have good upper abdominal definition. The usual suspect for turning the lower abdominals off is sensory motor amnesia -- you haven't used it, so you lost it. But many other factors can contribute to this abdominal amnesia," says Johnston, including:

- 1) **Tightness in your hip flexors & surrounding muscles:** "A tight psoas group which not only put the pelvis in a position of excessive anterior tilt but also holds the abs in a stretched position, effectively inhibiting them," says Johnston.
- 2) **Intestinal Inflammation:** "Intestinal inflammation can occur from medical drugs, food intolerances, alcohol consumption, etc. and can keep the lower abs from working since pain inhibits function," Johnston says.
- 3) **Poor Form/Improper Training Techniques:** Using poor form can mean that your 'upper abs' and/or psoas muscles can take over, meaning you rely on them during exercises and never have the chance to activate the lower region of your abdominals, says Johnston.

HOW TO FIX IT

The best way to fix pooch belly is to learn how to actually activate the lower abs, says Johnston. "Because if you can't turn the muscle on, you cannot train the muscle." He recommends mastering a move called the pelvic tilt in order to learn how to 'turn on' those muscles.

The Pelvic Tilt

To do it, lie on your back with your knees bent (as if you're going to do a crunch). Maintaining the natural lumbar curve that keeps your spine from lying flush to the floor, place one hand in the small of your back opposite to your navel. Rest your other hand on your abs, below your belly button and over to one side (where a pocket would be located if you were wearing jeans).

Then, using your lower abdominals, flatten your back so that you decrease or eliminate the curve in your lower back, until you feel pressure on the hand in the small of your back (your other hand should feel the muscles of your abdominals get tight). While performing this tilt, your hamstrings should stay relaxed (that's the hard part), says Johnston. Your hamstrings can also tilt your pelvis, and if they do the work, the lower abdominals won't! Johnston recommends doing at least one set of 20-30 FOCUSED reps a day (and you don't need to rest between sessions of this move since it's not intense enough to cause muscle damage—so don't expect a burn!), he says. "The moment you think you can do this exercise and whistle, you're probably doing it wrong! So concentrate instead of crunch, and watch your lower abs finally show up for once."





Top 10 ABS FAQ's

1) WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE ABS MOVES?

Bicycle crunches and planks have shown themselves to be highly effective in lab studies, though while the best moves can strengthen your abs, they won't give you 'flat' or 'six pack' abs unless you reduce your overall body fat.

2) AND THE LEAST EFFECTIVE?

Typically crunches (when done incorrectly) because most people don't do them correctly and end up pushing with their legs and glutes or pulling too much on their neck to fully engage the abs enough.

3) WHAT REALLY CAUSES BELLY FAT? IS IT BECAUSE OF CERTAIN FOODS?

Belly fat comes from an excess of calories – it's not about certain foods, though some foods can lead to temporary bloating in the belly area. Studies show that you can lose weight by eating doughnuts if you stay within a low enough calorie range to lose weight (not that we advocate that!)

4) ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC FOODS I CAN EAT FOR A FLAT BELLY?

To avoid bloat, pay attention to how you feel after eating. People with dairy problems for example may notice gassiness and bloating after consuming dairy products, while others may not. Too much fiber too fast can also cause some bloating in the gut.

5) HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM USING PROPER FORM DURING EXERCISES?

The wrong form affects everything! You can go from a very effective move, to a move that won't do anything for you if you don't use good form when you do it. Some of the most common mistakes include: pulling too much on the neck, turning your elbows instead of your shoulders on cross crunch moves, sagging your hips in plank positions, not engaging your abs on ANY move you do (i.e. pushing them out instead of bracing them into your spine) as you perform any abs exercise. Pay extra attention to cues you receive from instructors, and try to use a mirror whenever possible to watch (and correct) your own alignment.

6) I DO 100 CRUNCHES EVERYDAY, BUT ITS NOT HELPING MY ABS. WHAT GIVES?

Abs are like any other muscle group in your body. Would you do 100 squats in the morning and 100 squats at night? Most people do that many crunches when they want flat abs. You can't spot reduce so extra abs exercises isn't going to help past a certain point. Focus on total body resistance exercises, cardio and some abs moves to help reduce your body fat overall and show off great abs underneath.

7) DOES IT MATTER IF I GO FAST OR SLOW DURING MY ABS MOVES?

The faster the speed, the more likely you are to use momentum or lose your form during moves, but that doesn't mean if you focus on control and technique that you can't do certain moves quickly – it does help to keep your heart rate up and burn more calories overall.

8) I HAVE AN ABS ROUTINE THAT I REALLY LIKE – CAN I KEEP DOING IT OVER AND OVER AND STILL SEE RESULTS?

You shouldn't do the same workout over and over period. Your body thrives on new challenges - so keep your mind and body engaged by adding in a new routine or challenge (such as adding a weight) every 4-6 weeks or so.

9) HOW MUCH CARDIO SHOULD I BE DOING FOR FLAT ABS?

Cardio is key, but only if its in conjunction with a lower calorie diet. Too often I see people increase their cardio to help reduce body fat, but then they make themselves hungrier as a result and then end up eating (or drinking) back all the 'extra' calories they just burned off and then wonder why they can't lose weight.

10) CAN I TRAIN MY ABS EVERY DAY?

No. Abs are just like any other muscle group. You should allow at least one day in between targeted abs workouts for recovery.

Final Thoughts

Don't forget to focus on what you do the rest of the 23 hours a day when you are not working out - that is probably more critical to great abs than if you should do crunches or planks. Get enough sleep, eat the right amount of calories in the form of healthy, whole foods, drink enough water and relieve stress to have flat abs forever, not just during bikini season!

Want to learn even more about
the secrets to getting great abs?

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR GREAT ABS BIBLE

complete with a breakdown of abs anatomy & function,
over 100 abs exercises, plus tons of expert tips on eliminating
'doughnut abs', the pelvic floor/abs connection, restoring post natal abs
and more - available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

