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Beach Body Abs

By Nathan P Boyd

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by: **Nathan P Boyd**

With the return of warm weather in the spring, thoughts can never be too far behind of the approaching summer and the many wonderful outdoor activities that we'll often associate with it and among our top favorite summertime activities will always be the trip to the beach. Warm blue skies, refreshing ocean breezes, hot sand, cool waves and the many attempts at constructing the perfect sand castle; you can swear you're almost there just thinking of it. But that mental image just wouldn't be complete without also including images of hard, bronze bodies in attractive swimsuits soaking up the sun. Let's face it, attractive physiques will always be a top draw at the beach and the abs, or midsection, is the first thing that everyone notices.

But showing off beach body caliber abs certainly don't come easy. Successful ab training is a combination of a healthy, lean diet, consistent cardio work, and a comprehensive abdominal training plan. While all of that may sound daunting, it is certainly within your ability to attain a chiseled midsection that other beach goers will positively ogle at, and you certainly still have enough time to do so. This article will provide you with the steps you'll need to take to help you look your beach-body best.

Diet

The first thing you're going to have to change will be your diet. It goes without saying that even if you had the best abs in the world, it will still look pretty ordinary if a layer of bodyfat covers it. Diet plays a crucial role in defining your midsection so some modifications will be required in order for your body to look it's best. To begin with, get into the habit of using a diet log to keep track of your meals. Everyone is less likely to cheat when they know they have to write down everything they've eaten each day. An elaborate journal isn't necessary either; a simple notepad can work just fine. Also, begin switching to six small meals a day now instead of three larger ones to help rev up your metabolism as well as prevent the stretching of the stomach and the abdominal walls which occurs when one gorges themselves in food.

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Next, you'll want to start creating a slight caloric deficit each day to help burn away the bodyfat. It is recommended that you work on losing only a pound or two, a week, of bodyfat. The weekly loss of any more weight than this, for the typical person, probably includes substantial amounts of water weight and muscle tissue and can wreck havoc on your metabolism. Remember, it's the bodyfat that's covering your abs that you'll want to lose so a good rule of thumb is to cut back your daily energy requirements by only around 500 calories a day.

Now if you're not sure what your daily energy requirements are for your current bodyweight (or the amount of calories you will have to consume each day to stay at your current weight), you can use this easy-to-remember formula as a guide. To estimate your daily total caloric needs, multiply 24 times 1.0 (if you're a man) or 0.9 (if you're a woman) by each kilogram of bodyweight you weigh. Then multiply that result by 1.7 (for a moderately active man) or 1.6 (for a moderately active woman).

(Men) $1.7 \times 24 \times 1.0 \times \text{bodyweight (in kg)}$

(Women) $1.6 \times 24 \times 0.9 \times \text{bodyweight (in kg)}$

To determine how many kilograms you weigh, divide your bodyweight in pounds by 2.2. Remember though that this formula is only a guide. It is highly recommended that you use the formula as a starting point, and then pay close attention to your body in order to fine-tune your calories according to how your body responds to your efforts. Look at your body in a mirror, if it doesn't appear (or feel) as if your body is losing any weight after a week or two, then reduce the amount of calories you ingest even more.

Cardio

You'll next want to start including cardio (aerobic exercises) into your weekly routine. There are few short-term options that can burn calories and strip away the bodyfat better than sessions of aerobic activities. It is no coincidence that even top-level bodybuilders will steadily increase their cardio workouts as a contest approaches to help really bring out their muscle definition. Begin by working out 3–4 times per week for 20 to 30 minutes at a time on a treadmill or a stationary exercise bike. Then work your way up to more intense sessions of at least moderate intensity for 45 minutes or longer by weeks 3 and 4. The last few weeks before you hit the beach, you'll want to include interval training into your routine to really help blast away the last few pounds of bodyfat.

Exercise

Spot-reducing your way to abdominal definition is a myth. It is impossible to localize fat loss over any one specific area of your body and is the reason why it is important for you to also watch your diet and include aerobic training if you truly wish to showcase some beach-body abs. But the inclusion of some solid abdominal training is still important for great abs. Strengthening the abdominal wall will tone and help reduce, if not prevent, any unnecessary sagging of the belly. Also, abdominal workouts will certainly develop the muscles of the ab (particularly the rectus abdominus and the external obliques) and enable them to easily become more visible, sharper and tight.

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While there are literally hundreds of abdominal exercises to choose from, it is important that several considerations are first kept in mind before performing any of them. First, it is strongly recommended that you learn how to focus on feeling the contraction of your abs when exercising and really squeeze the muscle at the top of any rep. There are many individuals out there who lay claim to performing several hundred sit-ups per day, but it is the quality that counts here and not necessarily the quantity. Become more efficient when performing your abdominal exercises and allow the muscle do the work and do not use the mechanical involvement of other bodyparts or even momentum to help swing the body in order to complete any reps. Additionally, make sure that you maintain continuous tension while performing your reps and never allow your body to rest at the bottom of a movement. Finally, be sure to breathe in during the relaxation phase of your movements and exhale during the contraction phase of the reps.

Having now prepared yourself, choose three exercises to perform for your abs and complete 2 sets, of 15 - 20 reps on each exercise, three times a week. Once again, focus on squeezing the muscle at the top of the movement and go in a slow, deliberate manner during each repetition. Recommended abdominal exercises for beginners during their first week would be crunches (with legs supported on a bench), seated twists, and knee-ups or lying leg raises. As the next few weeks progresses and your

conditioning improves, you will need to increase the intensity factor for the abs to really shine. Begin by increasing the number of sets of each exercise from two to three and then add additional, more advanced, movements to allow for up to five exercises for your abs. Recommended abdominal exercises during this stage could include reverse crunches, crunches on an incline board, vertical leg raises, medicine-ball twists and decline-bench twisting crunches. You literally have from hundreds of movements to choose from. During the last two weeks before you hit the beach, begin cutting back on the rest time between your sets and also start to include supersets of your exercises in which you complete one set of each exercise without stop.

While there are still other factors that could be included for consideration of your ab training, consistently eating a lean diet, performing cardio work and exercising your abs with sufficient intensity will always remain at its core. Put in the work on those three tenets of abdominal development and you'll be sure to possess a beach-body that will look great in a bathing suit and absolutely turn heads this summer!

Nathan Boyd is author of the highly rated ebook, "The Fitness Lifestyle" and the current Director of Pro Fitness of Texas. Nathan encourages everyone in their pursuit of becoming physically fit and maintaining it for a lifetime. All questions and comments are always welcomed!

Lose Your Belly Fat And Show Off Your Six Pack Abs

By Chris Chew

Have you noticed that most people will never fail to include abdominal muscle exercises in their routines and yet somehow or other, they can never own that coveted 6 pack abs?

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Have you been religiously doing your abdominal muscle exercises? Is your abs showing to your satisfaction? No? Why? Do you know that your abdominal muscle is one of the easiest muscles to build but yet why is it that most people have difficulty in developing that 6 pack abs?

Here is the truth. Those of you who are working out your abs regularly do probably own that much sought after six pack. Yes, you do. The only trouble is that your belly fat is covering them. Your abs will not show up well if you have a body fat ratio of more than 12%. The more fat you burn off, the more defined your abs will be. You will own that rippling washboard abs when your body fat is 10% or less. So if you have fat on your belly, forget about abdominal exercises and burn off the fats first.

There is another reason why people put in so much effort to develop their abdominal muscle and yet their abs are not showing although they have low body fat. Again, there is a simple explanation. They are doing the wrong exercises and working out in bad form.

Let's take for example the most common abs exercises, the sit up and the leg raisers. Everybody seem to be doing these two exercises not knowing that these exercises really don't do much for their abs. Don't believe me? Ok...try this. When you do your sit up or leg raisers, place your palms on your hip on the area connecting to your thigh and perform the exercises. Tell me what did you feel? Ahhh....you are getting it. Those muscles there are doing most of the work. Those are your hip flexor muscles. Since your hip flexors are doing most of the work, how can you develop your abs effectively?

So you say, from now on I will do crunches instead. Well, I have another surprise for you. Most people perform their crunches wrongly too. Think about it. Why is the exercise called the "crunch"? It is because you must squeeze your abs so are that you are crunching them. In order to squeeze your abs hard, you have to curl up like a prawn and breath out all the air in your lungs at the top position and then squeeeeeeeeze the muscles so hard that you feel a burn. That will take a few seconds to crunch out all the air before you lower to the beginning position again. You can't do this effectively if you just go up, down, up down, up down rhythmically. So, if you have been doing hundreds of crunches everyday with minimal result, now you know why. In fact, it is almost impossible for the average guy to do tens of properly performed crunches and not to say hundreds of them. The same squeezing principle applies to other abs exercises.

Ok....now that you know why your abs are not showing up well, so get on with burning your fats and perform your workout in correct form. You will then see your 6 pack abdominal muscle in no time.

Chris Chew is a personal trainer of actors, male pageant winners, fashion models and other celebs. More free fitness tips on his websites at

and

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