

Scuba Fitness: Featured Exercise - The Abdominal Crunch (Photos)



Basic Crunch with Feet on Wall Starting Position (Gretchen M. Ashton, Photographer, Loren Kurz, Fitness Model)



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All scuba divers have “wash board abs” some just have a load or two of laundry resting on top.

Whether they are visible or not, abdominals are essential in supporting the back and stabilizing the body through complex movements associated with scuba diving. Without question a balanced abdominal strengthening program is an important component of scuba fitness and should be developed in conjunction with back strengthening and flexibility early in an exercise program.

Performing the basic crunch in this fashion reduces recruitment of the hip flexors and allows more focus on the anterior abdominals. Begin with a natural position of the spine. If needed a small folded towel or pad may be placed

under the low back for added support.

Contract the abdominals (pull the belly button toward the spine), place hands behind the head for gentle support, lift the chin upward and inhale deeply through the nose. Exhale while continuing to pull the belly button toward the spine and lifting the upper body as shown until the curve of the low back flattens against the floor or pad.

Increasing the lift of the upper body any further would involve enough other muscles to become less efficient and increase risk of injury. Inhale while maintaining the abdominal contraction and lowering the upper body to the starting position and repeat.

Modification: Divers with precluding conditions of the upper spine, neck and shoulders may perform the abdominal contraction portion of this exercise for repetitions without raising the upper body and with a pad under the neck.

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