

Legendary AB's

When it's time to hit the beach this summer will you be ready? With the warm weather fast approaching, it will soon be time to shed off those winter clothes and show yourself to the world. Will it be another year of hiding and coming up with excuses to get out of having to wear a bathing suit in public, or will this be the year that you feel comfortable about your appearance and are allowed to be yourself? Much of the answers to these questions lies in the work that we do in the next four months. Hopefully, you haven't over indulged too much this winter and are in striking distance from looking your best. You should have been training over the winter building strong muscle, and trying your best to avoid taste bud temptations. If you have, then you will be ready to put the finishing touches to your physique and strut your stuff. If you haven't, don't be discouraged you can still make it, but you might have to work a little harder. The true benchmark to absolutely know you are in top condition is a chiseled midsection with strong, solid abdominals. In this article, I will attempt to outline the major principles found in **LEGENDARY AB's**, whose advertisement is often seen in health and fitness magazines. I agree with many of the major principles and understand the importance of getting the most out of your exercises. I feel that this program is one of the best to train your abdominal muscles in a manner that will not only build size but emphasize symmetry and balance. Of course, before participating in any exercise program you should consult your doctor or physician and realize that if you are prone to recurrent back pain due to deconditioned back muscles, doing abdominal training can actually make your problem worse.

Before we begin let's get one thing straight, doing abdominal exercises for an attractive midsection is only half the battle. You can build strong, developed abdominal muscle that will never be seen if hidden under a layer of fat. As a matter of fact, many of us right now have dynamite physiques just dying to get out, but are never seen or felt due to excess body fat. So, the first and most important concept that must be understood is you must concentrate not only on building muscle, but at the same time reducing body fat. It has been well studied that the best way to reduce body fat is with cardiovascular or aerobic training. This includes various options such as running, bicycling, swimming, aerobics, step machines, rollerblading, or any other exercise that keeps your heart rate within 60-80 percent of your maximum for at least 20 minutes. The amount of cardiovascular training you need in your quest for defined AB's is directly proportional to the amount of body fat you have to lose. I recommend 20 min. aerobic activity three times a week for someone with low body fat or beginners, and up to 40 min. a day 3-4 days a week for those of us who need a little extra work. Remember, you can do AB work till your blue in the face, but if you have a layer of excess body fat, they will never be enjoyed. By doing this type of cardiovascular training, you will help melt off that unwanted fat and let your true physique shine through.

Another equally important concept that must be adhered to if you want a legendary waistline is that of diet and nutrition. All the aerobic training in the world won't help your midsection if you go home and eat a bag of cookies. Diet is probably the biggest obstacle in the battle for ripped AB's. For some, keeping healthy dietary habits is the

hardest part of the equation. Let's face it, we all love the foods that are the worst for our waist. But to achieve your goal you must reinforce to yourself that every time you indulge, you are actually causing pain to yourself in the long run. You have to create a vision in your head of how you want to look and realize that when you eat foods that are high in fat and calories too often, you are going farther away from that vision. Instead of thinking about all the short term pleasure that hot fudge sundae or Big Mac will bring, remind yourself of all the long term pain it will cause keeping you from reaching your goal. As far as dietary guidelines, if you want to have a leaner waist you must avoid foods high in saturated fats and calories. The foods you need to eat are ones nutrient dense and low in calories such as vegetables, fruits, grains, lean meats, fish, nuts, legumes and poultry. Also, if you want to get lean, you should be careful of "fat free" foods that are loaded with carbohydrates and remember that eating high carbohydrate, high calorie foods is great for extra energy but not so great if your goal is to get cut. By limiting the amount of fats and excess carbohydrates in your diet, your body will automatically choose to use your existing fat stores as a primary energy source and your body fat will drop dramatically. Also, make sure you keep your metabolism in high gear by eating many small meals throughout the day as opposed to eating two or three larger meals.

Now that you will be doing all the right things to decrease your extra body fat, you must focus on building the abdominal muscles. There are many products on the market today that are excellent for abdominal development. The AB Roller's, high tech abdominal machines, and classic floor work can all help in building the abdominals. But I want to share with you a secret that can make whatever abdominal routine you do that much better. This secret is revealed when you look at the actual anatomy and biomechanics of the abdominal region. It is understood that the abdominals can be divided into upper and lower sections, and the lower abdominals cannot be worked without the help of the upper abdominals. This means you cannot train the lower abdominals without hitting the upper abdominal section to some extent. Conversely, the upper AB's do have the ability to be isolated in training. In other words, *to work the lower AB's, you need to use both the lower and upper AB's. To work the upper AB's, you only need to work the upper AB's.* Realizing this fact, you can see where the problem occurs. Most of us in our abdominal training do not work the upper and lower abdominals in any set order, or if anything do most of our upper abdominal work first and then finish up with the lower AB's. By working the upper AB's first you fatigue those muscles to a certain extent. Now, when you go to train your lower AB's, you cannot get the most out of them because the upper abdominals are already tired and will quit long before the lower AB's are challenged. Brining the obliques into the picture, we can make a similar observation for twisting verses straight AB exercises. *Twisting movements involve the obliques and the upper AB's, while straight movements primarily involve the upper AB's.* The solution to the problem is to train the abdominal regions in a manner where you will be able to get the most out of each individual section. This can be accomplished by training the lower abdominals first, then add twisting motions for the obliques, and finally finish up with upper abdominal exercises. By using this synergistic training method you will be able to exhaust each muscle group to it's fullest capacity and gain balanced abdominal development. The following is a listing of some of the abdominal exercises that can be performed. For training the lower AB's- Leg Raises, Reverse sit-ups,

Hanging Leg raises and Hanging Knee-ups. For the obliques try Cross Knee abdominal cramps, twists, and the Rotary Torso. For the upper abdominals use crunches, Abdominal Pull-downs, and Knee Rock-backs. For more information on how to properly perform the above mentioned exercises you can contact our office or invest in a fitness manual that explains each exercise.

Listening to the television advertisements would make it seem that having rock solid abdominals is easy with just minutes of training a day. The reality of the situation is that having a great midsection takes dedication, discipline, and sacrifice. To get lean you must reduce your body fat with cardiovascular training and diet. To build strong abdominal muscles you must train smart and make sure you are developing symmetry and balance to your physique. By using the principles outlined in this article, coupled with a burning desire to achieve the look you want, you can turn your ordinary physique into an extraordinary masterpiece and finally have the summer you always wanted.