



From Washtub to Washboard in 5 Easy Steps

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Today, there are more people than ever in pursuit of the elusive washboard stomach. This is quite a paradox, considering the fact we have more modern medical, exercise and nutrition technology than ever, yet we have more obesity -- washtubs -- than ever! How can it be that, even among the people who go to the gym regularly and are often doing 100 sit-ups and crunches or more every day, washboard abs are seemingly unattainable?



It's really quite simple ...

Most people working on a washboard stomach are making one or more major mistakes in their application of the foundational principles that underlie success in any physical or athletic endeavor. For your body to reduce enough of its fat content to actually appreciate the muscles you've worked so hard to show off, it has to be absolutely convinced you can safely get by with such a low percentage of body fat.



To see washboard abs of merit, males will need to reduce body fat to approximately 9 percent or less and women will have to get to approximately 13 percent or less. This is not easy to do! After all, body fat serves as an energy reserve, a site for storage of toxic chemicals it can't currently eliminate from the system safely, thermogenesis, organ protection and much more.

For example, the female body resists getting below 13 percent body fat because it is programmed to always have enough energy on board to feed a developing fetus and maintain energy reserves necessary to stabilize hormonal production. These functions are threatened once a woman's body fat drops below 13 percent. The only females I've seen successfully reduce body fat below 13 percent, while maintaining a healthy menstrual cycle and body, were eating high quality whole foods proportioned for their unique metabolic type. Such a woman is both strong AND healthy!

In fact, a washboard abdomen is a sign of strength and durability, and Mother Nature doesn't support false advertising. Only those resorting to chemical tricks such as metabolic stimulants and drugs can develop a washboard in the presence of an otherwise unhealthy body. But, there is always a cost in the end: You lose it and it is even harder to regain each time you try.

Proper Eating Habits

I will lay it out straight and simple and can assure you that each time you break one of Mother Nature's foundational principles, your chances of developing washboard diminishes significantly.

1. Eat organic foods. Commercially farmed foods have high levels of pesticide residues, even in New Zealand, a country reported to be among the cleanest and most natural in the world. As I show in my recent book, [How to Eat, Move and Be Healthy!](#) (p. 57), when scientists analyzed a child's lunch right from the cafeteria line in a New Zealand elementary school, they found residue from 22 different pesticides, many of which were at levels several times the safe limit.

Most consumers, then, are exposed to a variety of toxic substances. When you bring in more toxic chemicals from your food or environment than your liver can effectively process, toxins are shuttled into your fat cells. This is because inadequate nutrition often cripples the liver's detoxification pathways such that the conversion of fat-soluble chemicals to water-soluble chemicals can't effectively take place.

The result in such situations: These partially converted chemicals damage or sclerose the liver if they are not shuttled into the fat to be stored until the body can complete the process effectively. In short, in the presence of high levels of toxic chemicals, **the liver keeps the fat cells around as a storage site in order to save itself from being damaged.**

When there is adequate nutrition in the diet, the pathways of detoxification are enabled, allowing for the conversion of fat-soluble chemicals to water-soluble chemicals that can safely be excreted by the kidneys. In the absence of optimal nutrition, no matter how hard you exercise, your chances of reducing the fat around your midsection will be reduced in proportion to how toxic your body is due to the fact that reducing toxins is also depends on the following variables:

- Proper hydration
- Optimal nutrition
- Adequate exercise
- Sound breathing mechanics
- A functional bowel

Compounding the fact of fat accumulation, many pesticides are estrogenic. That means, when you consume those substances through your foods, you are more likely to have a harder time building muscle because of estrogen's antagonistic effect on testosterone, thus you become less efficient at removing toxins.

As you consume more estrogenic pesticides, your detoxification pathways become progressively more challenged, increasing the likelihood of shuttling excess toxins and hormones into fat until it can be effectively processed by the liver. In some people, the failure to eat and live according to sound health principles will result in disease or death, regardless of how fit they are. (By being fit, **I mean a measure of work capacity, not of health or well-being!**)

2. Eat right for your metabolic type. This simply means that you must eat properly for your racial and ethnic origins, which is a major influence on your genetics.

For example, if you are a native of New Zealand, you will need a diet that is a mix of produce and flesh foods (such as fish and game) in equal proportions because that is what the environment provided the people who live there for thousands of years. If you are an inland Aboriginal, you will do better on a diet of about 80-90 percent plant matter and only 10 percent flesh foods because of the conditions in the desert, the environment to which your body has adapted. Coastal Aboriginals typically eat about 75 percent of their diet as flesh foods due to the availability of animals.

Adapting to Your Body's Proper Eating Habits

If you study the work of Weston A. Price (see "Nutrition and Physical Degeneration" at www.price-pottenger.org), you will find that the amount of animal foods consumed by any native tribe was determined by availability, not by religious or cult idealism, as some would have you believe! If you don't know your metabolic type, there is an easy test you can do in my book.

If you eat wrong for your metabolic type, your body thinks you are having an energy crisis and begins to accumulate fat. You may be eating plenty of calories, but, as Bill Wolcott says, "You don't feed lions leaves and you don't feed giraffes steak." If you do, both will get sick and eventually die. You are no different. Eat right for your metabolic type, eat high quality organic foods and soon, your washboard will begin to appear!

3. Keep well hydrated. To be properly hydrated, you must drink water, not coffee, tea, juice or other commercial drinks. Often, these are dehydrating agents, or have a high enough solute content that they act as foods in the body.

To determine how much water to drink per day, divide your body weight in pounds by two and consume that many ounces of water daily. If you use the

metric system, multiply your body weight in kilograms by .033 and consume that many liters of water daily. Billions of chemical reactions in your body that depend on water take place each second. Without it, your body starts saving water in your tissues, making you look puffy and feel tired, **not healthy and vital**.

I also recommend you drink only high-quality filtered water or bottled water, and not from the tap. Tap water contains numerous industrial chemicals that are now ubiquitous in most environments, not to mention most cities chlorinate their water to kill bacteria. These unnatural chemicals will kill the friendly bacteria in your gut too, leaving you with increased likelihood of dysbiosis. For other important tips on selecting and drinking water, please see my book, [How to Eat, Move and Be Healthy](#) (pgs. 78-80).

4. Use Big Exercises! There is no such thing as spot reducing, meaning all the abdominal exercises in the world won't improve your chances of seeing your abs!

I've consulted professional athletes who could do so many crunches and sit-ups, they burned a hole in the carpet. But all they had to show for it was rock hard abs hiding under Jell-O pudding and bad posture! If you want a six-pack you can see and appreciate, you need to focus on the big, high-energy movements in the gym, like squatting, lunging, rowing, cable pushes, and some of the more challenging Swiss Ball exercises like push-ups off the ball, supine lateral ball rolls, supine hip extensions with knee flexion.

Initially, these energy demanding multi-joint exercises should be performed for 1-3 sets of 12-16 reps at a moderate tempo with a 60- to 90-second rest period. This will elevate your metabolism, remove fat and expose your abs, preparing you for the more intense exercises on the next page that will give you a beautiful pronounced washboard.

5. Blast the abs hard. Always **end your workout with abdominal isolation exercises** because they are very important stabilizers. If you fatigue them before training other key movements as suggested in #4 above, your chances of injury go way up! To have a beautiful washboard midsection, I suggest progressing to high intensity abdominal exercises. That means doing



Figure 1A



Figure 1B



Figure 1C



Figure 1D



Figure 1E

crunches while laying over a Paul Chek DuraBall (safe for weight lifting) while holding a dumbbell on your chest (Figures 1A-E).

To safely perform a weighted crunch, you must begin by having dumbbells to anchor your feet, the total weight of which is equal to or greater than the dumbbell you are using for your weighted crunch. Failure to follow this directive can result in injury! To begin, place the dumbbell on the end of a weight training bench and position yourself over a Paul Chek Duraball as shown in Figure 1A.

Note the feet are hooked under the anchor dumbbells and when you roll forward to accept the dumbbell from the bench, you must keep your head and back slightly extended to keep pressure through the ball, stopping it from shooting out from behind you. Also, make sure the floor is clean, because a dirty floor makes for a slippery surface ... not good for your body!

Once you have rolled the dumbbell up onto your chest (Figure 1B), you will lay over the Duraball, inhaling as you extend backward until your head touches the ball (Figure 1C). Allow the dumbbell to roll up until it touches your collar bones. From here, make sure your tongue is on the roof of your mouth behind the front teeth and just prior to initiating the crunch, draw your umbilicus toward your spine. The crunch begins at the head and rolls progressively down the spine, like you were rolling a scroll and continues until your abdominal muscles are fully contracted.

As you perform the crunch, breath out through pursed lips and allow the dumbbell to roll slightly forward with you as you crunch (Figure 1D). When you've completed your set, let the dumbbell roll down your body to your pelvis and extend your hips high enough that you can comfortably roll it onto the weights bench, always keeping your back arched over the ball so it doesn't shoot out from under you (Figure 1E).

Start Slowly!

It is important to perform the exercise with your body weight first and then move to progressively heavier dumbbells to warm-up, particularly if you go heavy like I am in Figures 1A-E (that is a 200-pound dumbbell). After three to six weeks of preparatory conditioning using a mix of exercises, you can progress to high intensity sets of 6-8 reps using moderate to fast tempos for 3-4 sets.

Rest between training sessions and don't train the abdominals hard again until the soreness is gone from your muscles. Too much exercise keeps the muscles in a breakdown state. You won't get good results, but you may get injured!

Other helpful exercises are Reverse Swiss Ball Crunches (RSBC) (Figures 2A-B). To perform the RSBC, it is imperative that you find a firmly anchored, stable

structure to hold onto such as a squat cage. The exercise generally works best with a 75 cm ball because of the increased range of motion it affords.

Anchored as shown in Figure 2A, the hips are flexed to the point at which the pelvis just begins to roll posteriorly and held there. At the same time, the lower abdominals are relaxed and the spine is allowed to extend so that you literally wrap your spine around the ball, inhaling as you do so. To initiate the exercise, draw your navel inward and roll your pelvis toward the head like you were rolling a scroll. When your abdominal muscles are fully contracted, the movement is complete (Figure 2-B).

After a few weeks doing this exercise, you can increase the resistance by holding a small dumbbell between your feet, but progress slowly with this exercise (see Figures 2C-D).



Figure 2A



Figure 2B



Figure 2C



Figure 2D

Wood Chops and Pushing With a Cable

Cable Wood Chops (Figures 3A-B) and Cable Pushing (Figures 4A-B) are also very effective core conditioning exercises that can give you a beautiful torso and improve functional movement skills for all work and sports environments.

To complete the wood chop, face sideways to a cable column (shown in Figure 3A) and take a stable stance slightly wider than shoulder width. Grasp the handle with the hand furthest from the cable column and place the other hand over it. Start with 70 percent of your weight on the leg closest to the cable. Draw your belly button in toward your spine and initiate the movement by bending your legs, pushing away from the weight stack and rotating your trunk away from the cable column while simultaneously pulling the handle downward across your body.



Figure 3A



Figure 3B

The movement ends when your hands are just above or slightly outside your foot (shown in Figure 3B). Inhale as your arms go up and exhale through pursed lips as you bring your arms down and across your body. When lifting a load under which you can only do fewer than 13 reps, you may need to hold your breath through the initial part of the movement and then release your breath through pursed lips after passing the hardest part of the movement. Perform the exercise on each side.

Here's how the Single-Arm Cable Push is executed: Stand facing a cable column that has been adjusted to shoulder height. Take a split stance with one leg forward and the other behind you. Your knees should be soft and unlocked.

Grab the cable handle, using the arm on the same side as the rear leg (shown in Figure 4A). Draw your belly button in and initiate the movement with your back leg and trunk and simultaneously rotate your trunk toward the forward leg while pushing the cable out in front of your shoulder (shown in Figure 4B). Keep the forearm in exact alignment with the cable throughout the movement. Do not let your elbow drop below or rise above the line of the cable. Reverse this movement with your free arm. Reverse this movement until you reach the starting position and repeat this movement.



Figure 4A



Figure 4B

The Wood Chop and Single Arm Cable Push exercises are best used on the same day you do pushing exercises, such as the bench press. If you are going heavy on the bench, do that before your core training. But, if you want to focus on your core, do the bench press after cable pushing or wood chops.

Cycling in explosive exercises such as forward or lateral medicine ball tosses also help because the rectus abdominus muscle (the washboard muscle) has a predominance of fast twitch muscle fibers, which means it responds favorably to high intensity and high-speed movements.

And all this time you couldn't figure out why 500 crunches a day was getting you nowhere!

I recommend using high-speed movements every third or fourth week of training for one or two workouts. You can also try including high-speed medicine ball exercises directly before or directly after some of the high intensity exercises above once you are in good shape. If you do this type of contrast training, cut the

number of reps down on the first exercise so that your motor skills are not deteriorating to the point of losing control on the second exercise. This form of training is not only great for building a strong core. It also develops the nervous system.

Another important principle to follow while working toward the washboard is that if you are going to use isolation exercises targeting the upper, oblique and lower abs on the same day, always start with the lower abs first. Why? The lower abs require much more coordination to train and fatigue faster, followed by the obliques and finally the upper abs, which are real workhorses.

This form of training should always be the last thing you do before leaving the gym because fatiguing the abdominals before other exercises increases your risk of spinal injury due to stabilizer fatigue.

Now that you know how to develop a washboard in concert with Mother Nature's principles, please do it. Today, Mother Nature is like the U.S. Marines. Both are looking for a few good men and women!