



WEEK 1

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

WEEK 4

THE MINDFUL

Abs Challenge

You're just one month away from a slimmer, stronger core. Everything you need to get started is right here. Let's do this!

[#MindfulAbsChallenge](#)

WHY NOW Your core includes not only your abdominals, but also all of the muscles on the back and sides of your torso, even down into your glutes. You might think your waistline matters only when it's time to zip up your favorite pair of jeans, but your midsection is about much more than just looks—it's the building block for everything you do. Want nice posture? Love running, walking, working out or playing with your kids? You can do all those things better with a stronger core.

HERE'S HOW Our four-week challenge, designed by Meg Furstoss, M.S., C.S.C.S., founder of Precision Sports Performance, in East Hanover, New Jersey, doesn't require you to step on a scale or pick up a measuring tape. You'll know the inside-out transformation is happening because you'll feel—and look—slimmer and stronger.

Fire Up Your Core

A strong core equals more power for your whole body.

MASTER THIS High Planks

Planks are the granddaddy of core moves. They fire up not just the abs, but all the muscles encircling the spine.

How to: Get in push-up position with feet shoulder-width apart and palms under shoulders. (Beginners can start on knees.) Squeeze glutes and abs, push through palms and look at the floor. Aim to hold for 30 seconds. Rest and repeat three times, four days this week.



SNEAKY MOVE Turn sitting time into flex time

Stuck in traffic or tied to your desk for the next few hours? Work your abs by pulling your belly in and up. Hold for a few seconds and then release, repeating as many times as you want.



DID YOU KNOW?

Exercising to music might help you lose belly fat faster. In one study, people who did their crunches to tunes lost up to eight pounds more than those who worked out in silence.

FUEL UP

Salmon isn't just good for your brain; it's great for a flatter belly. The credit goes to the high amount of omega-3 fatty acids that help your body burn fat rather than store it.



STEP IT UP Brisk Daily 30-Minute Walk

Walking is one of the best ways to burn fat and calories and feel better from head to toe. Don't worry if you can't find a solid 30 minutes to pound the pavement; you can break this up into chunks of time that fit your schedule.



Take Aim at Belly Fat

One of the best reasons for strengthening your core is that building muscle speeds up fat burn. Combine it with your daily walks and you're giving belly fat a one-two punch.

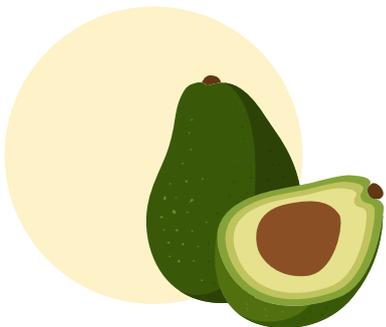
MASTER THIS Seated Twists

Get ready to zero in on your love handles (aka oblique muscles). **How to:** Sit on floor with back tall, knees bent and feet slightly off the floor. Bend arms 90 degrees, keeping elbows tucked in. Turn shoulders to right and touch both hands to floor. Return to center and repeat on the left side. That's one rep; do three sets of 20 reps, four days this week.



SNEAKY MOVE Lift a foot

The simple act of standing on one leg helps strengthen your core and all the muscles in your lower body. Try holding the pose for 30 seconds on each side the next time you're washing dishes or waiting in line.



FUEL UP

Avocados are a tasty source of belly-friendly monounsaturated fats—they can help you burn body fat faster and keep fat from settling at your waistline.

DID YOU KNOW?

Having too much fat in the belly area (as opposed to your arms or legs) is more harmful to your heart health. The sweet spot for women is a waist circumference of 35 inches or less; 40 inches or less for men.

STEP IT UP Brisk Daily 30-Minute Walk + Planks

Be sure to keep your pace quick and pump your arms to engage your abs even more. As for the planks, fit them in four times this week, after a walk or along with your seated twists.

Challenge Your Muscles

This week, dig deep and challenge your core muscles to do a few more seated twists and extra seconds on planks.

MASTER THIS **Bird Dog**

Give the muscles deep in your core some love.

How to: Start on the floor with your hands under shoulders and knees under hips. Squeeze abs and glutes and balance on left knee and right hand. (No sagging hips or arched back.) In one motion, reach left arm forward and extend right leg back. Release and repeat on other side. That's one rep; do three sets of 10 reps, four days this week.



SNEAKY MOVE **Find the edge of your seat**

Turn sitting into active core work by moving to the front of your seat. Be careful to tuck your hips under slightly (no arched back) and sit tall.



FUEL UP

Eating more **whole grains** can help trim fat from your waistline. Foods like brown rice and barley keep you full and less likely to overeat.



STEP IT UP **Brisk Daily 30-Minute Walk + Planks + Seated Twist**

This week, take note of your stride. Shorter, quicker steps can help you blast more fat. That's because longer strides actually slow you down. Do the core moves four times, after a walk or on their own.

DID YOU KNOW?

Zeroing in on your core strength has a bonus of helping you get a better night's rest. Research shows people who strength train are more likely to sleep the recommended seven to eight hours per night.



Go All In

For the final week of the Challenge, check your progress (*longer plank hold, anyone?*) and continue ramping up your workouts. You've got this!

MASTER THIS **Superman**

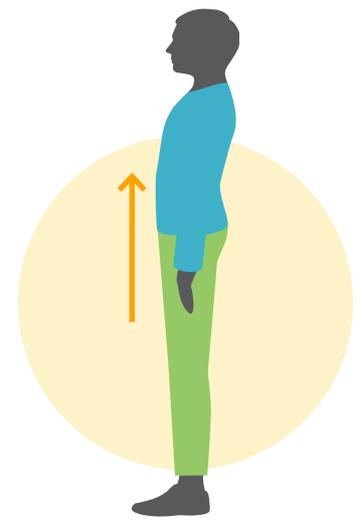
This move targets all the muscles along the back of your body and is great at fixing poor posture.

How to: Lie face down with arms extended. Lift torso and legs off the floor so stomach is touching floor. Slowly return to the start position; do three sets of 10 repetitions, four days this week.



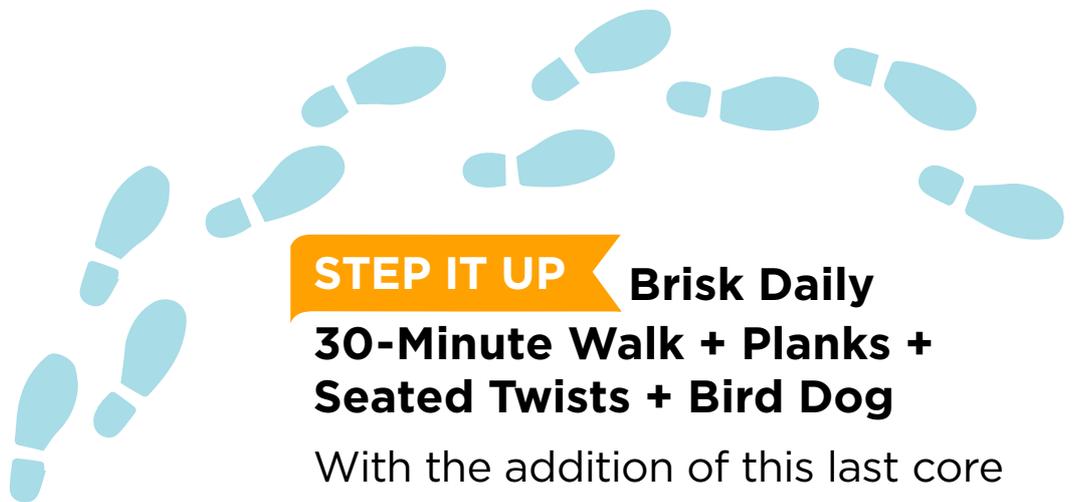
SNEAKY MOVE **Check your posture**

The simple act of sitting up straight or standing tall calls your core to action. When you're sitting you don't want your chin or neck to be sticking out, and when you're standing you want your tailbone slightly tucked under.



FUEL UP

Green-tea drinkers may benefit from a greater fat burn compared to coffee drinkers and other caffeinated sips.



STEP IT UP **Brisk Daily 30-Minute Walk + Planks + Seated Twists + Bird Dog**

With the addition of this last core move, you now have a solid core circuit routine. Even though the Challenge is winding down, you can continue to strengthen your core by sticking to your daily walks and four days of core work.

CONGRATULATIONS! You've just completed a tough-but-totally-worth-it four weeks of ab workouts. Take a moment to be proud of yourself—and the awesome results.