

FIRE FITFACTS

FROM THE PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT
AND THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE

Fire Hardened Abs

Turn on the TV and you're likely to come across an infomercial trying to sell you the latest product or video guaranteed to flatten and tone your stomach. For just \$29.95 (and up), you too can have a washboard stomach or those elusive "abs of steel."



Strong abs are necessary for many sports and especially important for fire fighters when dragging hose operating on the fireground. In fact, you can start right now, free of charge!

Recognizing that not everyone can achieve a chiseled midsection. It is possible to develop strong abdominal muscles, thereby strengthening the back, without spending a lot of money.

Technique is Everything

The single most important thing you can do to correctly train your abs is to use proper form. There are many myths and misconceptions when it comes to abdominal training. Here are some points to remember when performing abdominal exercises.



- ❖ Begin with your knees bent and your back flat on the floor.
- ❖ Don't pull on the neck during the movement.
- ❖ Keep the chin a fist's distance from your chest.
- ❖ Start with the arms across the chest; as your abs become stronger, cup your hands around your ears.
- ❖ Start with the feet anchored under a couch or by a partner. As your abs become stronger, perform your crunches with nothing holding your feet down.
- ❖ Don't throw your body, or use jerking motions. Slowly squeeze your abs to bring your upper back off the ground.
- ❖ Keep the abs pulled in by visualizing your naval pressing toward your spine. Keep your back flat against the floor.
- ❖ Always exhale as you contract and inhale as you release.
- ❖ Start with 5 good reps and gradually increase to 15 or more, with perfect form.