

March 2016 | myfitnesspal.org | Jessica Smith | Exercise

*[ NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with Simple Again's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you. ]*

## New To Core Training? Try These Four Moves

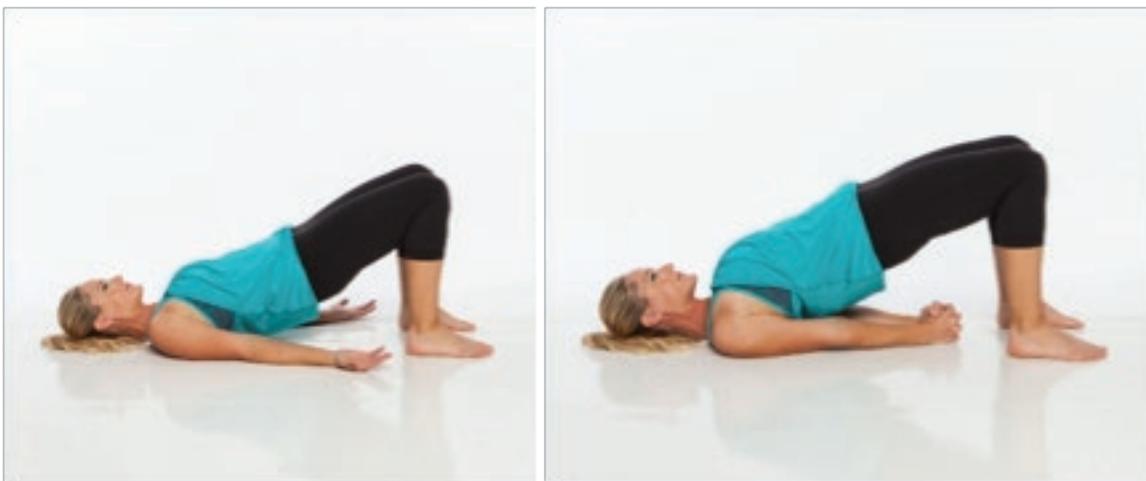
Mix up your abs routine with this series of yoga-inspired moves designed to work the waistline from every angle to create strong, pulled-in abs that not only appear flatter, but also help support the spine too. Try one, or all, of these moves in place of any of your favorite traditional ab exercises up to four non-consecutive days per week.

For a full video workout with more moves like these, be sure to check out our "Yoga Stretch for Beginners and Beyond" DVD, which features two complete 30-minute a.m. and p.m. practices—an energizing flow designed to build a foundation of strength and stamina, and a relaxing flow designed to help deeply stretch and release tight and sore muscles.

### **Bridge Pose**

Get more bang for your buck with this move, which works your abs, glutes and hamstrings.

Lie face up with knees bent, feet hip-width apart and feet flat with arms extended by sides, palms facing up. Draw abdominals in towards spine and engage pelvic floor to lift hips off the floor slowly. Try to keep your glutes relaxed.



If you feel ready for more, try walking up onto your shoulder blades, and draw hands together, clasping palms and pressing arms down firmly against the floor. Make sure to keep your knees pointing forward in line with the toes.

Hold the pose for 30-60 seconds, breathing deeply and, during each exhale, draw the navel in closer to the spine to further contract the abdominals.

## Modified Side Arm Press

Build the strength and core control needed to eventually hold a full side arm press, or side plank position.

Lie on your left side with your elbow directly beneath the shoulder and your legs stacked. Bend your bottom knee (keep knees and hips stacked), and place right hand on hip.

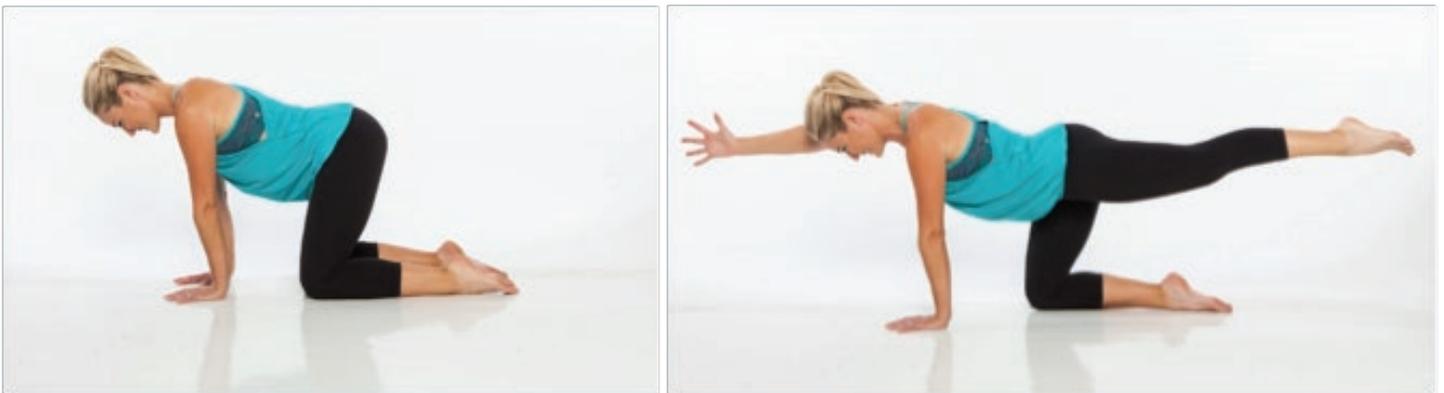


Draw your abdominals in towards the spine and press shoulders down towards hips to lift hips off the floor. Raise your right leg up in line with your hip, and extend the right arm to the ceiling above your shoulder.

Hold the pose for 30-60 seconds, breathing deeply and, during each exhale, focus on drawing the navel in closer to the spine to deeply contract the abdominals. Repeat on opposite side. Ready for more of a challenge? Keep both legs extended and/or extend the bottom arm.

## Opposite Arm and Leg Balance

The abdominals and back work together as a team to help stabilize the spine during this balance-challenging move.



Begin on your hands and knees, with spine neutral, abdominals engaged and hands directly under your shoulders. Keep your knees under your hips.

Take a deep breath in and slowly extend your left leg behind the hip and your right arm in front of your shoulder.

Keep your eyes focused on the floor to avoid neck strain and help with balance. As you exhale, return to the start, drawing abdominals in deeper towards the spine. Repeat on the opposite side, using your breath to guide the speed of the movement. That's one rep. Do 10 reps total.

## Downward Dog Hover

Use the abdominals to control the movement of your lower body during this dynamic core stretch.

Begin on hands and knees, with spine neutral, hands directly under shoulders, knees under hips. Press shoulders down and draw abdominals in towards the spine. Lift knees slightly off the floor (without raising hips in the air) to hover above the ground about an inch or two.

Take a deep breath in and slowly extend into downward dog pose by straightening legs, lifting hips up and back, and pressing the chest towards the thighs until the body resembles an upside down letter "V." Press the heels as close to the floor as possible.

Modify by bending knees or lifting heels as needed. Exhale and return to hover position, drawing abdominals in as tight as possible as knees bend towards the floor. Repeat for a total of 10 repetitions, using your breath to guide the speed of the movement.

