

Seated Medicine Ball Trunk Rotations

Target Body Part: Abs

Primary Muscles: Rectus Abdominus (abs), Transverse Abdominus

Secondary Muscles: Erector Spinae

Equipment: Medicine Ball



Step 1

Starting Position: Sit on a mat/floor with your knees bent, feet together, and heels on the floor. Start with a light ball (1-2 lb) and increase the weight of the ball as your fitness level improves. Sit as tall as possible with your back erect so that your torso is perpendicular to the floor. If you have tightness in your back and legs that prevents you from getting into this position, try sitting on a cushion or a rolled mat in order to lift your hips and help facilitate a straighter spine. Hold the medicine ball close to your body between your navel and your ribcage. Use your breath to help engage the muscles of your core. On your exhale, imagine you are tightening a belt around your waist and deepen the contraction of the abdominals.

Step 2

Rotation: Keeping the spine erect, exhale and slowly rotate your torso to one side, imagine that the ball is buttoned to your torso. It should stay in place through the entire exercise. Do not allow the ball to drop toward the floor. Pause briefly at the end of the twist, inhale and then gently exhale while rotating completely to the opposite side. Repeat the movement back and forth.

Step 3

Exercise Progression 1: When you can perform the movements in Step 2 easily and without strain, you can modify the starting position by slightly leaning back while keeping your knees bent and heels on the floor. Once again, keeping the ball buttoned to your torso, try to enhance rotation so that the elbow is close to, but not resting on the floor. Keep your core and abdominal muscles active to prevent arching the back or low back discomfort during the exercise. This exercise variation increases the demands placed upon your abdominal muscles.

Step 4

Exercise Progression 2: As you continue to progress, you can incorporate even greater challenge by modifying the starting position once again. Lean back halfway to the floor and lift your feet off the floor. Keep your knees bent and feet together. Once again keeping the ball buttoned to your torso, enhance the rotation by attempting to bring the elbow close to, but not resting on, the floor. Try to keep the shoulders relaxed. Your back should remain straight. Keep your core and abdominal muscles active to prevent arching the back or low back discomfort during the exercise. This exercise variation increases the demands placed upon your abdominal muscles.

Intermediate and advanced rotational exercises should only be attempted after completing the beginner exercises.