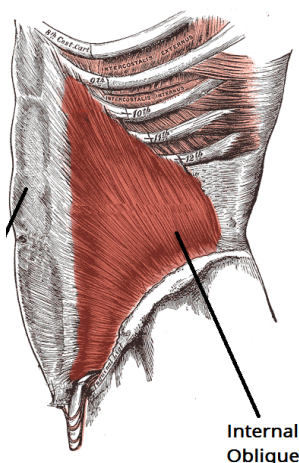


Tummy toning programme

Here is your **FREE** 'Tummy toning programme'. Below are a few tips to ensure that you get the best results out of this programme.

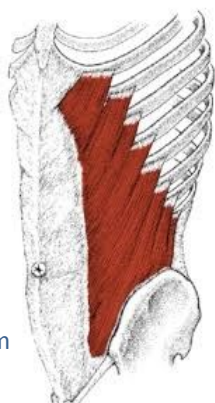
- ⇒ Remember this is a general programme relevant for those who do not have existing musculoskeletal problems with their bodies. If you currently suffer from any pain in your body, or whilst trying to undertake these exercises you experience pain, then please ensure you book an appointment with Roz Thomas to check it out. Roz Thomas will not accept any responsibility for those willing to undertake this programme without first having had an assessment.
- ⇒ There are a range of exercises in this programme aimed at different levels of ability and covering the 4 different abdominal muscles as pictured in each corner. If you struggle with any of the exercises described please ask for variations to either make them easier or harder. This is a basic outline which needs to be finely tuned to each individual.
- ⇒ Transverse Abdominis is the deepest of these muscles and is what a lot of people associate with 'core strength' and pilates type exercises. It provides a secure foundation to support the Lumbar spine and to allow you to work the other abdominal muscles effectively. Without a good Transverse Abdominis muscle contraction, you are more likely to experience back pain, so it's a key one to get right!
- ⇒ I am reluctant to advise on exact numbers of repetitions or length of time that you should hold a contraction for, as each individual is different and will be able to achieve different results. They also vary depending on what type of 'look' you want! If you want to improve general toning and stability then you aim to find an easier exercise that you can undertake several repetitions. If you are looking for bulking up, and muscle definition then you push yourself to the maximum effort and only undertake a few repetitions. However, you need to ensure that you don't make the exercise too hard and then compensate elsewhere and compromise on the technique, as this is likely to cause you an injury.
- ⇒ It would be best to use a thin mat on the floor, or if you don't have one, then a duvet. That will give better support than trying to do them on a mattress on your bed. Don't do the exercises just after eating!



Internal Oblique

⇒ Despite looking at strengthening the abdominal muscles, it is equally important to stretch them out afterwards. Otherwise by only strengthening them, they will shorten pulling you into a flexed position which is not healthy for your lower back.

⇒ It was fashionable to trap your feet under something or ask a friend to hold them down to perform sit ups—but this is not recommended. It swaps the function of one of the muscles and is now considered bad practice!





Aiming to get from this

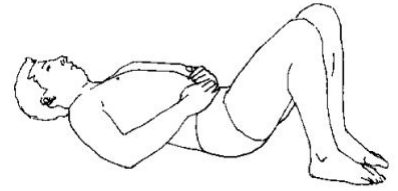


.....to this!



1. Transverse Abdominus (TrA)

Lying with your knees bent up, and placing your fingers just inside the bony parts of your pelvis on each side. Make sure your pelvis is in neutral (this means your back should be flat on the floor, without an arch. But not so flat that your bottom is tucked in and your pelvis rolled up off the floor).



Without holding your breathe or attempting a sit up, draw your belly button in and tighten your pelvic floor as if stopping yourself going for a wee. You should feel the muscle tighten up under your fingers.



Once you have the technique hold it for as long as you are able to—it's a postural muscle. Doing less and holding it more is better. This exercise will form the foundation for all the others below.



2. Upper Rectus Abdominal

Place your feet up on something, or just cross your ankles in the air and hold them with your hips and knees at 90 degrees. Then bring in your TrA exercise as above and hold it. I find it easier to put my arms out straight about mid thigh height, and aim to reach through my fingertips to the back of the chair or exercise ball. Keep your chin tucked in (like a double chin!) to prevent any neck problems and repeat as many small crunches as you are able, maintaining your TrA. With your back only lifting up as far as where your bra strap might be, and returning to your shoulder blades being flat on the floor. Have a rest between sets of these.



3. Lower Rectus Abdominal

Lying flat on your back with your feet out straight, you might notice that your pelvis is in anterior tilt (with an arch off the floor). So bring your hips and knees up to 90 degrees flexion to find your pelvis neutral position, then bring on your TrA exercise. From here slowly take one leg at a time down straight, and before resting it on the floor swap them over, and repeat. The aim is not to let your pelvis arch up off the floor as your leg straightens. The slower you perform the exercise the harder it gets. The lower you get your leg to the floor without resting it on the floor the harder it is, and you can try to hold this position. Firstly one leg at a time and then try both legs straight! How low can you go without your TrA giving in and your back arching! BE CAREFUL this is hard and can cause an injury if you over do it! Find the point you are able to hold it for a few seconds. Then repeat a few sets.



4a). Obliques

Lying on your back, with your knees bent up and one ankle on the opposite knee. Place the opposite hand behind your head. Find pelvis neutral position and bring on your TrA on. Then aim to get your elbow towards your opposite knee. They don't need to touch, so don't pull your head but focus on contracting your obliques. Again only until your shoulder blade lifts up off the floor and then back flat, without resting your head relaxing between each contraction. Repeat a few of these on one side then swap sides.



4b) Obliques

Half lying on your side, with your feet together and knees slightly bent. I prefer to put both hands across my chest. Then bring on TrA. Try to use your obliques on the side facing the ceiling to just lift your bottom shoulder up off the floor a few centimetres and then back down. Its quite a difficult technique to get. Even if you don't lift up off the floor but feel your bottom shoulder lighter on the floor—persevere! It's a kind of quick rocking motion, like a sideways crunch. Repeat as many as you are able and then swap sides. Then repeat a few sets.



5. Overall Abdominal strength/stability



'Doing the plank' seems to be a popular exercise at the moment, for strengthening your core muscles, but it is extremely high level to ensure that you get the correct technique and can maintain a neutral pelvis, and a straight spine. If your bottom sags to the floor then your back arches and can cause injury. It is also quite strenuous for your shoulders.

You can try less strenuous variations, by shortening the levers, and resting on one elbow and both knees bent up keeping your hips level, not sagging to the floor. This is more specific to your obliques, but you can use the same technique, resting on your knees instead of your toes for the plank. Its crucial that you get your TrA muscle to fix your abdomen/pelvis in neutral. These aren't completely necessary, but I wanted to share the correct technique for those who can't resist trying it!



6. Abdominal stretches

Lying flat, rotate either both knees or take one foot over the opposite knee and rotate, to stretch out your obliques. Hold it to allow the muscles to stretch, then repeat it on the opposite side.

Lying on your tummy, come up onto your elbows and push down through your hips to stretch your rectus abdominals. If you don't feel a stretch on your elbows, push up a bit further onto your hands. Hold it for a stretch then slowly come down to lying on your tummy then repeat.



These can be done interspersed with the above or at the end.

