

December Wellness: Holiday Crunch

By Anne Praino

Well, we pushed our way through October, trotted into November, and we'll finish off our 3-month calisthenic challenge with good old-fashioned crunches. That's right...it's not a holiday snack mix or a last-minute shopping spree. We're talking about the crunches that strengthen the core and build the abdominals.



What you may not know about crunches is that in addition to their tummy-flattening benefits, they also help improve your balance by strengthening your abdominal muscles. Strong core muscles improve your posture, which helps prevent lower back pain and muscle injury. Let's face it, your abdominals help to stabilize you. Much of our daily lifestyle includes lifting, twisting and reaching-- all moves that rely primarily on this area of the body. So, it's not only important to maintain the core so we look good, but also so we can function effectively every day. (*Ketchum*)

The benefits of crunches do not stop there. For those who suffer from constipation, which many do on a regular basis, it may be due a decreased level of peristalsis; this means your bowel does not contract quickly enough to pass your digested food through your system. Crunches can help trigger your bowel so that it spasms and "wakes up." Often, combining crunches with a walk and a gentle laxative work effectively to relieve constipation. (*McCoy*)

Again, no money required for crunches, and you can do them anywhere. For those of you that cannot lay on the floor, check out standing ab exercises and do your crunches while making your coffee in the morning or waiting for the water to boil for dinner. Literally anyone can do them in just a little bit of space somewhere in their home and just a few minutes of time! It is important to note that if you have experienced back problems in the past, consult a doctor and be cautious when doing crunches. (*15 Different Types of Crunches and Their Amazing Benefits, 2020*)

So, no one is expecting a six-pack in a month. But we are hoping you will use the handy Holiday Crunch guideline to get you started. The monthly schedule recommends a few varieties of crunches. For any you don't recognize, simply Google the name and no question, you'll find an easy-to-follow YouTube video. And if you're just not interested in researching a twisting crunch or a long arm crunch, stick with the basics.

It's crunch time!

Sources

- *15 Different Types of Crunches and Their Amazing Benefits.* (2020). Retrieved from Fitactiveliving.com: <https://fitactiveliving.com/different-types-of-crunches/>
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Tycor Benefit Administrators, Inc.®

850 Cassatt Road, Suite 310
Berwyn, PA 19312

www.tycorbenefit.com

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