

ABS WORKOUT | MARCH 24, 2011

Muffin top blues: Work now for a sexy summer six-pack



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Got the muffin top blues?

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Slideshow: [Do you have the muffin top blues?](http://www.examiner.com/conscious-living-in-los-angeles/do-you-have-the-muffin-top-blues-picture)

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With chilly So Cal temps and winter rainstorms still looming in Los Angeles, now is the perfect time to focus on warmer days and firm up that muffin top for bikini season. Combining a consistent abs workout with the right foods will find you a tighter belly by summer.

So, where exactly are your abs?

The abdominal muscles are located between the ribs and the pelvis on the front of the body. The abdominal muscles support the trunk, allow movement and hold organs in place by regulating internal abdominal pressure. The deep abdominal muscles, together with muscles in the back, make up your 'core' muscles and help keep your body stable and balanced, and protect your spine.

Work 'em.

Raphael Verela (<http://www.circuitworksla.com/raphael.html>)

from **Circuit Works** (<http://www.circuitworksla.com>), known for their high-intensity interval training workout in two West LA -area locations (Santa Monica and Brentwood), says getting a sexy six-pack can be incorporated into your daily lifestyle.

“The key to getting the abs you want is by doing exercises that engage your abdominals – core stability exercises – and train your body into doing it. For example, when you take a spin class, don’t sit down throughout the session. Your abdominals have to work twice as hard to help your legs pump the pedals and race up that hill,” says Verela. “In addition, spend about five minutes *only on abs* at the end of



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Sheryl Craig is a native Angeleno and currently lives in Santa Monica, California where she often runs on the beach or bike rides through her...

each workout session. You will notice an improvement within 5 to 6 weeks.”

Circuit Works suggests three exercises are multi-taskers: 1) **Stability Ball Leg Curls**, which work the hamstrings while strengthening your abdominals (keep hips high in the air), 2) **Bosu Ball Squats with Weighted Ball** gives you the opportunity to work abs, glutes, quads and shoulders – this one is a total core exercise, and 3) the **Kneeling Heel Extension** engages both abs and leg muscles. Learn these exercises and more at **Circuit Works’ One on One “Express” Training** (<http://www.circuitworksia.com/personaltraining.html>). The 30-minute workout offers both strength training and cardio all into one session, and CW trainers will monitor your every move so that you are doing the exercises correctly and get the best results possible.

Good news ... eat a muffin.

Bringing **dietary fiber** into your daily diet has huge health benefits and helps keep stomach bloating to a minimum. Dietary fiber is carbohydrates that aren’t digested by human enzymes. Found mainly in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes, dietary fiber is best known for its ability to prevent or relieve constipation, and yep, it definitely aids in weight loss, too. High-fiber foods tend to make a meal feel larger and you’re less likely to overeat, staying fuller for a greater amount of time.

Trader Joe’s has one of the best muffins in town. The **Trader Joe’s High Fiber Blueberry Muffins** (<http://www.traderjoes.com/stores/index.asp>) (80 cal each and 12g of dietary fiber) are a perfect breakfast companion or snack. Eat two of those and you are good to go for the day. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 issued January 2011 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, the **recommended fiber** (<http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>) intake is 25g for women and 38g for men.

You heard it here ... water!

Drinking a glass of water before each meal not only makes you feel fuller so you won’t overeat, but you are guaranteeing

that you are nourishing your body with H2O ... one more way to rid the bulge.