

## Wave of the Fitness Future: 3-D Core Training

January 12, 2011 by Jenn

2 Comments



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Credit: tableatny

*Today's post is written by core performance guru, Linda LaRue. Linda is the creator of Crunchless Abs and the new, constant resistance, 3-dimensional workout, **The CORE TRANSFORMER**, which burns nearly 1,000 calories per hour.*

There's a new workout movement that's gaining popularity within the fitness community based on elite performance training. Historically speaking, most peak performance fitness trends began in the elite and pro athlete training rooms. Then, they were embraced by fitness professionals, both

personal trainers and group fitness instructors. Some examples include bodybuilding pioneered by legends, such as Joe Gold and Arnold Schwarzenegger; core performance using stability and heavy medicine balls; and now the next evolution that's gaining popularity: 3-dimensional fitness training .

### What Is 3-D Fitness Training?

Why is it the next evolution of peak-performance training? And how does it benefit you? Let me explain. The abs crunch, while it has a handful of applications, is not functional. In real life, especially in elite and professional sports, you must quickly use your whole trunk, such as when you're catching a pass, blocking or tackling, all while standing upright. In other words, moving in the three dimensions of space (and not just crunching up) requires progressive strength or resistance from your body. It also delivers better results.

Three-dimensional fitness training gives you the biggest bang for your buck (Need proof? Check this [workout DVD review](#) out!). In order to work the core in three dimensions you have to do progressive, constant, multi-planar resistance with a cardio element. Because the movements require so many systems to work in a singular coordinated effort, the exercise becomes high-intensity very quickly. And results are about intensity, not duration.

Today, core training is fundamental in the fitness industry. It seems like everything abs these days is being labeled core, which is creating a great deal of confusion. The difference between functional core performance and the standard abdominal crunch can be boiled down to their respective results. One will train a specific portion of abdominal muscle, and the other will transform how your body looks, feels and performs.

### Getting to the Core of the Issue

All movement begins from your core. The purpose of functional core training is to first strengthen the stabilizer muscles in your entire trunk to create a strong, stable core or pillar. Your core begins from the base of your skull and goes down through and includes your hips. Your core is an amazing anatomical composition of about 29 muscles that wrap around your midsection like a girdle or back brace. Some of these important muscles are the transverse abdominis, erector spinae, obliques, pelvic floor (PC), iliopsoas and multifidus, to name a few. The goal of functional core training is to establish a proper sequence of diagonal cross firing muscle patterns known as anterior, posterior, transverse and lateral slings. This kind of movement will create proper upright posture and spinal alignment, a strong back, balance, gait, and finally, movement by your legs and arms. In other words, your core is essential for every movement in life.

A balanced, strong body requires a well-aligned, balanced, strong core. From a purely cosmetic viewpoint, when properly trained, the core acts like a girdle, holding and pulling in your entire abdominal region tight and flat—especially that lower belly "pooch" that many consider a problem area.

### How to Go 3-D

Core moves can be done in a variety of positions. The best core moves are performed in a standing position because in life we primarily move standing upright—not horizontally. In fact, when we're horizontal we are resting or sleeping, so not much reason functionally to train that way, right? Fitness products such as a stability ball or BOSU are great tools that create instability within your trunk, thus forcing your body to instinctively use all your stabilizing core muscles.

Most body builders and fitness buffs do an endless amount of crunches or sit-ups to achieve flat, sculpted six-packs abs. However, because sit-ups only train the two, superficial ab muscles, the biomechanics are all wrong. Crunches or sit-ups do not train the important core muscles that truly act as an abdominal girdle by pulling your midsection in tight and flat. Thousands of repetitive, boring crunches might help you get the superficially sculpted abs, but at the cost of your back muscles.

The bottom line: Only true, functional constant resistance 3-dimensional core-performance training is guaranteed to get you those flat, sculpted abs of your dreams, along with developing a strong, healthy back, while blasting that stubborn, top layer of belly fat in the shortest time possible. And the entire body benefits, too. So stop doing those crunches and **start working that whole body!**—Linda LaRue

## Top 10 Hardest Workout DVDs

January 3, 2011 by Jenn

19 Comments

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Credit: mary\_thompson

So you say you want a workout challenge, eh? Well, we have 10 of them—our top 10 list of the hardest workout DVDs we've ever reviewed. Hold on to your fit butts—it's about to get crazy hawd in here!

**1. Jillian Michaels' No More Trouble Zones:** Jillian always brings the good pain. And this [workout DVD](#) gives you a mix of strength and cardio that is uber challenging!

**2. Bob Harper Inside Out Method: Bob's Workout:** Oh, Bob, how we love yet hate thee, let us count the workout ways. Even after doing this [strength-cardio workout DVD](#) regularly for three months, it still kicks

my ass.

**3. Personal Training with Jackie: Crunch-Free Xtreme Abs:** There's only one word to describe this [crunchless abs DVD](#): Ouch! And, of course, that's in a good way. With two quick workouts, your abs will definitely feel the burn and the soreness. Oh, the soreness!

**4. Exhale Core Fusion Body Sculpt:** This [Pilates- and dance-based workout DVD](#) is no joke. You may not think it's that hard with all the stretching and breaks, but trust us. It'll work you in new fabulously challenging ways.

**5. Mindy Mylrea's Action Packed/Interval Express:** Mindy Mylrea is a total bad ass. While you can't really go wrong with any of her workout DVDs, we found this [interval workout DVD](#) to be particularly awe-inspiring (just how does she do it?) and something to aspire to.

**6. Fitness by Cathe: Cardio+Weights 4-Day Split:** Right up there with Mindy Mylrea in crazy-fit instructor-dom is Cathe Friedrich. With endless variety, this [heavy strength DVD](#) challenges and then some.

**7. Jillian Michaels' 30 Day Shred:** Jillian makes the list again! We just couldn't leave this [hard-workout DVD](#) standby off the list. With three 25-minute workouts that progress in intensity (read: darn near impossibleness), it's an oldie but a goodie!

**8. The Core Transformer:** Say goodbye to crunches and hello to full-body three-dimensional core training with this [incredibly intense workout DVD](#) that runs you through sports-specific moves and tons of plyometrics!

**9. Pure Barre Pershing Square:** If you've ever wanted the body of a ballerina, now is your chance with this [Barre DVD](#). But let us warn you, getting there is hard, hard, hard! Expect your legs to feel like they'll fall off. Fun, fun!

**10. Jari Love: Get Ripped 1,000:** While we're still not convinced that this [hour-long workout DVD](#) will burn 1,000 calories for most women, we still think it's awesome. And its advanced strength and cardio moves are enough to get the sweat pouring!