

AB ACTIVATION

The effects of different loads on ab muscle activation during crunches



Original Research
Moraes, A.C., et al.
EMG activation of abdominal muscles in the crunch exercise performed with different external loads.
Physical Therapy in Sport 10:57-62, 2009.

MANY SPORTS REQUIRE A STRONG MID-SECTION. AND ABDOMINAL TRAINING DELIVERS — IF YOU DO IT RIGHT.

Go to any gym and you will see people doing all sorts of abdominal exercises, from basic crunches to fancy balancing acts on a stability ball. However, one thing you will not see is people using any resistance, that is, add weight to the ab exercises they are doing. You know that if you want to get stronger and more powerful, you need to contract your muscles against some sort of resistance. Nobody gets stronger by just doing countless reps of push-ups without at some point finding a way to add weight, or perhaps by turning around, laying on a bench, and bench pressing a loaded barbell. If you need resistance to effectively increase the strength of your muscles, from your quadriceps to your pecs and biceps, then it makes sense that you need resistance to strengthen your abdominals too. Yet most athletes seem to train their abdominals differently from the rest of their body...by doing tons of repetitions with little resistance. Why would you limit your strength gain in such an important part of your body?

Power Key: abdominals, muscle activity, electromyography, crunch