

Muscle Strengthening at Home (Sit-ups)

(Dave Patania)

Now, we're going to work everybody's favorite muscle group, the abdominals.

We'll do this with good old-fashioned sit-ups. We'll show you the two ways to do this classic activity.

The first method may be better for those of you just beginning to work these core muscles.

Lie on your back on the floor, with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.

Place your hands behind your head, elbows pointing out.

Slowly raise your shoulders and upper back off of the floor, pause, and lower your shoulders back on the floor.

Remember -- only lift your head and shoulders off of the floor. Don't sit up completely.

Be sure you're breathing, throughout your abdominal workout, exhaling as you raise your body, and inhaling as you lower yourself back to the floor. Don't pull on your head or neck with your hands, and keep your chin lifted toward the ceiling, with your elbows pointed out. If or when you're ready for more of a challenge, modify this activity by raising your legs to a 90 degree angle and crossing them. Place your hands behind your head, elbows pointing out, and slowly

raise your shoulders and upper back off of the floor, keeping your chin pointing straight toward the ceiling. Pause, then, lower yourself back to the floor.

Don't forget to breathe. Do 1 set at least 2 times per week.

As you get stronger, these will become easier.