

# Build a Strong Core at Home

EMELEE CRONINGER: All righty. Welcome, everyone, all the Global Campus students, to our livestream. We're going to teach you how to do an at home ab workout to build your strongest-- the strongest core you have. This is Shawn. Go ahead and introduce yourself, Shawn.

SHAWN FIELD: I'm Shawn. I'm one of the personal trainers at the Rec Center here. Emelee is also one of the trainers at the Rec. And, yeah, like she said, we're going to teach you how to Build a Strong Core at Home with no equipment necessary.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Go ahead and talk about the workout.

SHAWN FIELD: OK. So today it's going to be broken down into three different circuits. Going to be a beginner circuit and an immediate circuit and an advanced circuit. We'll go through 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off, which just means you're going to perform the movement for 20 seconds and then take a 10 second break.

There will be five exercises for a total of two and a half minutes, and to get the full workout, you'll repeat it four times for a total of 10 minute circuit. So go ahead.

EMELEE CRONINGER: So to start off, we're going to go ahead and go through a brief little warm up. You can go ahead and do this with us. So I'm going to walk Shawn through it.

So we're going to go ahead and start with jumping jacks. So to do jumping jacks, you're going to go ahead and extend your arms above your head at the same time that you're sending your legs out. So go ahead and demonstrate this, Shawn.

Good. We're just wanting to get your heart rate up a little bit, get that blood flowing, that blood pumping as we start prepping for our at home workout. Ready, and three, two, one. Perfect.

Next thing, we're going to do our arm circles. This is going to loosen up the shoulder joints. So what Shawn's going to do is he's going to reach his arms up, rotate them as he goes through the full range of motion for his shoulders. This is just going to loosen up those shoulder joints and help get that blood flowing once more.

And reverse. Perfect.

You want to make sure your chest is staying up tall. We want everything to be elongated. The spine is reaching up towards the ceiling. Three, two, one. Perfect.

Now we're going to do some squats. So, for squats, you're going to go out and start with your feet a little bit wider than hip width apart, toes pointing forward. You're going to sink your

weight back in your hips. Keep your core tight and your chest up tall. Go ahead and demonstrate that for us, Shawn. And come on up.

You want to go down to parallel or whatever feels most comfortable for you, and come back up. Shawn, go ahead and give us five. Perfect.

And if you're doing this at home, make sure you're going down low enough to whatever you feel most comfortable with. Perfect.

All right. So that's our quick little warm up for today. We're going to go ahead and walk through our easy circuit. So Shawn is going to demonstrate for us.

The first thing we have in our circuit is a plank. So you have a couple different options for this plank. Option number one, you can go ahead and start from your knees. You're going to put your arms on the ground in front of you. Your joints are stacked. Your shoulders are going to be over your elbows, over your wrist. You're going to extend your body out so, that way, you have a straight line going from your head down to your glutes and down to your knees.

So go ahead and do that, Shawn. Extend yourself out into a perfect plank. Good. And then you can kick up onto your toes, as well.

So notice how he has a nice, straight line going down from his head to his hips, down to his heels. Perfect. Awesome job. So in our workout, you're going to hold that for 20 seconds and then go ahead and drop down. Perfect.

Next thing we're going to do is a side plank. So Shawn is going to take this same form, and he's going to rotate onto his side. So on one hand, he's going to stack his feet up. If this is a bit challenging for you, you can go ahead and take that top foot and place it out in front of you for a little bit extra support and stability. This is just to add a little bit more stability. But Shawn's going to go ahead and take that foot back on top since he's strong enough to hold the plank.

So notice how, same thing, he has his body in a straight line from his head to his hips to his toes, feeling that in the sides of his core, called his obliques. Go and come on down, Shawn.

Next thing we're going to do are leg lifts. So go ahead and roll over onto your back. So you have the option to have your hands down by your sides or tucked underneath your glutes for a little bit more support. So Shawn is going to keep his out to his side. Next, he's going to keep his feet together, and he's going to lift his legs up. Perfect. So that way, they're perpendicular with the ground. And lower them back down. And come back up. And lower them back down. Awesome.

So the lower you lower your legs down towards the ground, the more tension you're going to feel. If this is a little bit challenging for you, you can lower them halfway and bring them back up. Awesome job. How'd that feel?

SHAWN FIELD: Good. Feels good.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Feeling it in your core? Good.

Next we're going to do our bird dogs. So go ahead and flip on over.

OK. So you're going to go ahead and start on all fours. Same thing-- his joints are stacked. His shoulders are over his elbows, over his wrists. And now he's going to make sure his spine is nice and neutral, and he's going to lift up his left arm and his right leg and extend them out, keeping that spine in a nice, neutral position. And bring them back down. And switch. Do the other side. Good.

So really common mistakes with this is people tend to arch their back. Go ahead and hyper extend your back. See how that's not the best position for this? We want to make sure we have that nice, neutral spine, nice, strong foundation.

Good. And the last thing we're going to do in this circuit are called toe touches. So go ahead and roll back over onto your back, Shawn. So he's going to roll over onto his back. He's going to lift his legs up in the air, and he's going to bring his arms extended out in front of his head, and he's going to lift his fingertips up towards the ceiling, lifting his shoulder blades up off the mat. The higher up you lift your shoulder blades, the more tension you're going to feel, the more challenging it's going to be. Perfect, Shawn. Just like that.

All righty. That's our first circuit. So Shawn is going to go ahead and demonstrate. We're going to go through a live demonstration of it, and you all are more than welcome to do it with us.

So we're going to do 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off. If, during this time, you have any questions, you can go ahead and write them down in the chat, and we will take time after we finish the circuit to address those.

So, Shawn, are you ready?

SHAWN FIELD: I'm ready.

EMELEE CRONINGER: OK. Ready? 20 seconds on, starting with planks in three two, one, go.

Perfect. Notice how he's also pushing up through his shoulders. You can see the activation and the strong stability through his shoulders. Really, really good, Shawn. Here we go. Less than 10. You're doing great. Keep that core tight, body in a straight line. Head is neutral. Perfect. Three two, one. Go ahead and drop. You have a 10 second break, and then we're moving into our side planks.

SHAWN FIELD: Remember to switch sides.

EMELEE CRONINGER: OK. Ready? You're going again. 20 seconds in three two, one, go. Perfect. Same thing-- notice how his body's in a straight line. He's got this nice, strong shoulder right here, keeping it nice and compact. Awesome job, Shawn.

10 seconds in. Here we go. 10 seconds left. Doing great. Ready, and three, two, one. Perfect.

10 seconds break. We're moving into those leg lifts. Go ahead and flip it on over. Leg lifts. Go ahead and lift those legs up. Ready? 20 seconds in three, two, one, go. Perfect.

So if this was too challenging for you, and you wanted to make it a little bit easier, Shawn, go ahead and go halfway. Good. The shorter the range of motion, the easier it's going to be. Three, two, one. Perfect.

Go on, flip it back over. Moving into those bird dogs. How are you feeling? Feeling it in your core?

SHAWN FIELD: Yep. Feeling my core.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Good. That's what we want. All right. Bird dogs in three two, one, go. Good. Once again, we want this to be slow and controlled. Too many times, we see people flailing through the motions, going way too fast. And you're not getting enough bang for your buck when you're doing that. So make these motions slow and controlled. Focus on feeling the tight contraction in your core. Three, two, one. Awesome.

Moving into our last exercise, we have toe touches. Toe touches. K, ready? 20 seconds in three two, one, go. Good. Really lift those shoulder blades up off the mat. Awesome job.

If this was too challenging for you, as well, you can go ahead and bend the knees a little bit. Take a little bit of that resistance off. Awesome. Three, two, one. Perfect.

Killed it. Feeling tired?

SHAWN FIELD: Feeling tired, yeah.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Core's feeling tired?

All righty. We're going to open the floor now to questions. So if you have any questions as we proceed through the rest of our workout, go ahead and put those in the chat, and we will address them.

Now I'm going to turn the time over to Shawn, and he's going to walk us through the second circuit.

SHAWN FIELD: OK. Thank you, Emelee. So that was the beginner circuit. Now we're going to do the intermediate circuit. So this one's a little bit more advanced, a little bit harder movements. But I think most of you should be able to do some of these.

We're going to start on the floor. These are called dead bugs. You'll start on your back, hands up in the air, feet up in the air.

Sorry, I'm breathing hard from that last circuit.

EMELEE CRONINGER: And now you're going to make me pay for it.

SHAWN FIELD: Yeah, now it's her turn. We're going to extend one arm and the opposite leg out as far as we can. You want to reach as far as you can go. Reach for the toes. Reach with the fingers. You're going to switch sides.

The important thing here is keep a tight core and a stable base, right? So good. Looks good.

OK. So next-- that's the first move. We're going to do 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off. Next move is called in and outs. What else do you call these? Tuck ups?

EMELEE CRONINGER: Tuck ups.

SHAWN FIELD: I like to call them in and outs.

EMELEE CRONINGER: I call them tuck ups.

SHAWN FIELD: On your butt, hands on the ground. You're going to pick your feet up off the floor. Extend them out as far as you can. Make sure your elbows can come down like this, though. You want to put your hands facing your butt so that you can have a little base to push off of if you need some extra help.

Good. So you're going in and out, extending as hard as you can. To make this a little bit more difficult, you can always put your hands in the air or just pick them up off the floor. Makes it a little more difficult because you have to balance, as well.

Third exercise here is going to be a plank with a twist. So similar to the exercise that we had in the first circuit, you are going to be up on your toes, up on your hands. Make sure your wrists are stacked on your shoulders. And you're going to bring one of your knees up and try and drive it towards the opposite elbow. So Emelee did her right knee to her left arm. Good. And she switches back and forth.

The important thing here is to try and keep the back flat, right? As people start to get tired, they start to really round the back, and it starts to put them in a bad position. So that'll be a fourth or third.

The next one will be reverse crunches, so you'll be on your back. Legs extended out. Good. Hands on the floor. You can put them under your butt if you need a little bit more stabilization. And then you're just going to simply rock your hips up off the floor, and try to bring them straight up. Imagine somebody had their hand right above you. You're trying to touch their hand. You're not trying to bring them way back over your head. Try and keep them in front of your chin. So it's just hips off the floor. You can have hands off to the side makes it a little more difficult. Hands underneath the butt for a little bit more stability.

And, last, we have flutter kicks. So she'd be on her back. Hands underneath her butt to be more stable. Hands out to the side if you're really strong. Good. And then you're going to go up and down. You want to keep them anywhere between six and 18 inches off the floor, right? The closer to the floor you can go, the more stress is going to be placed on the abs.

If your hip flexors start to tighten up here-- so that's just the top part of your leg here-- you can try and flex the butt cheeks, flex the hamstrings, and that'll hopefully loosen these ones up, and it'll be able to put more of the stress on the core rather than the hip flexors. OK?

Ready for the circuit?

EMELEE CRONINGER: Sweet. I'm ready. All righty.

SHAWN FIELD: OK. So, first, we have dead bugs, right? So hands up in the air, feet up in the air. Good. You're going 20 seconds on. Go.

Good. So you'll notice she's staying really stable. She has her hands up in the air. And, again, if you wanted to do this in a little bit different way, you can also switch it up and do the same side, same arm, same leg. But for our purposes, we're doing the opposite. So three, two, one. Time. Perfect. 10 second break.

Now we're moving into in and outs. So she's going to be on her butt. Hands facing her backside. Feet up in the air. Three two, one. Go for it.

She's going in and out. Good. Full extension of the legs here. Point your toes. It will take your lever out a little bit farther, so it'll be a little bit harder. Flex the toes up towards the shins, and it'll be a little bit easier. Hands up off the ground makes it a little harder. Good. Three, two, one. Time. Perfect.

Next is going to be our plank with a twist. So similar to the first one. Good plank form. Flat back. Hands stacked under the shoulders. Perfect. Ready? Nope. Three, two, one, go for it.

Good. Remember you're trying to drive the knee across the body, right? You want to touch-- you want to see if you can touch that knee to the opposite elbow. Good. You're halfway. 10 seconds in. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Perfect.

So now we are going into reverse crunches. So flat on your back, feet up in the air, hands underneath the glutes to give you a little bit more of a base. And two, one, go ahead.

Remember to drive your feet straight up in the air, right? The hips are trying to move just straight up. The feet shouldn't come back past your chin. They shouldn't come over your head. Good. Halfway. Keep going. Five, four, three, two, one. Time. Awesome.

And last is flutter kicks. So on your back. Hands underneath the glutes for a more base. Hands out to the side will make it a little bit harder. And three two, one, go for it.

Good. So Emelee tries to point her toes. Make it a little bit harder on her. She has more of a length to work with. Good. You're doing great. Halfway. Hands out to the side for these last 10 seconds. Good. Five, four, three, two, one. Time. Awesome.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Whew! Feeling it in my core.

SHAWN FIELD: Feeling it in your core?

EMELEE CRONINGER: Yes.

SHAWN FIELD: Good. OK. So that was our intermediate circuit. Is there any questions for it? No questions? Perfect.

Here is this. Emelee is going to explain the more advanced circuit now.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Well, I don't know about you, but I'm feeling that, for sure. So if you're doing it with us, I'm sure you can sympathize, and you feel it.

So now I get to put Shawn through the hard circuit. The fun one, right? I know. I made him do it.

So this next circuit is the most challenging, OK? Same thing. We have five moves. However, you don't need any equipment for all them except one. One-- the last thing we're going to do, and I'll walk you through once you get there-- you'll need something to hold on to hold you down. So a couch, a table. Pretty much anything that you can find at home can work for this last one.

So, first, Shawn's going to walk us through a scissor kick with a three second static hold. OK. So he's going to go ahead and start by lying down on his back. Same thing where, if his arms are down by his side, it's going to be a little bit more challenging. If he wants a little bit more support, he can go ahead and tuck those hands underneath his glutes. He's going to lift one leg up in the air, trying to keep those legs straight, and he's going to alternate, holding for three seconds at a time in between. If you want to alternate? Good.

If you want to make this a little bit more challenging, you can point your toes and lift your head and shoulder blades up off the mat. Good. Notice how these are slow and controlled motions. Same thing. We don't want to flail out of control.

Go ahead, Shawn. Go ahead and drop. I don't want to kill you yet. We're not going through the full thing yet.

Next, we're going to do V ups. OK? So this is kind of a progression from in and outs or tuck ups. So for V ups, you want to start with your body flat on the ground. You're going to keep your legs straight. You're going to lift your body up into the air, making a V shape. So go ahead and what that looks like, Shawn. Good. And back down. And go again. Perfect.

Notice how his legs, his lower body, and his upper body are moving in sync. He doesn't have one portion moving before the other. He has them moving in a synchronized motion. This is going to make him get the best out of the core workout. And it's also going to help strengthen his quad and his hip flexors, which he talked a little bit about during that previous circuit.

Next, we're going to show you some oblique crunches. So this is similar to a V up. A V up works your middle section of your core. This is going to work more of your obliques, the side parts of your core. So you're going to go ahead and roll over onto your side. You're going to have one arm out in front of you. This is kind of like your stabilizing arm. You can have your hand behind your head, or it's just resting on your side. Sort of a personal preference. It doesn't affect the workout whatsoever.

You're going to, in the same synchronized motion, lift your upper body up and your lower body, and you're going to feel it right in that side of your obliques. Perfect. Just like that. How's that feel, Shawn?

SHAWN FIELD: Oh, yeah. I feel it in my obliques.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Good. Sweet. So when we go through the live version of the actual workout, we'll do 20 seconds on one side, flip it over, 20 seconds on the other.

OK, next, we're going to go ahead and do a plank with an opposing limb lift. All right. So Shawn is going to go ahead and flip over into a plank. We already demonstrated the perfect plank position. So, Shawn, go ahead and get into that perfect plank position. All of his joints are stacked. He's got a straight line down his body.

Now he's going to lift his right arm and his left leg up in a synchronized motion, and back down. Good. Opposite. Ready? This is a very challenging move. It takes a lot of practice. You'll feel it in your core, as well as in your shoulders, your back and your legs. So you've got the whole body working here.

Perfect. Go ahead and drop, Shawn.

And the last thing we're going to do are called scorpion kicks. These are the ones that you'll need something to hold on to with, a couch, a table chair, milk cartons, anything that you can use to hold on to.

So Shawn is going to go ahead and turn this mat to the side, or you can keep it that way. Go for it. So he's going to go ahead and lie down on his back. What you need the piece of furniture for it is to tuck your hands underneath. So, right now, Shawn has his hands tucked underneath this handy dandy kettlebell rack, and he's going to extend his legs out in front of him.

Like I said, this is one of the more challenging ones of the circuits. So go ahead and extend your legs out in front of you. He's going to go in and lift his body up, using his core, and as he lowers down, we want his legs and his hips to touch the ground at the same time. So, Shawn, go ahead and demonstrate what that looks like. You are using your core to fight gravity. We don't want to let gravity pull you down.

So go ahead and show us one more, Shawn. You're doing a great job. Hang in there. Good. So see how he's fighting gravity to keep his hips up off the ground long enough to bring his feet down, as well.

Good. How you feeling?

SHAWN FIELD: I feel good. I'm ready for the circuit.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Sweet. All righty. We're going to go ahead and go through the actual workout. So, Shawn-- you're killing it by the way. So glad you did this hard circuit and not me. I got away with the intermediate one.

OK. So we're going to go ahead and start with those scissor kicks with a three second hold. Are you ready?

SHAWN FIELD: Yeah, I'm ready for it.

EMELEE CRONINGER: 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off. Ready? Here we go in three, two, one, go. Good. So you can count to three in your head, out loud, whatever you feel most comfortable with. You're just focusing on holding that top leg up close to your body, as well as holding this bottom leg up a few inches from the ground. Awesome job, Shawn. And three, two, one. Awesome.

Moving into those V ups. OK? Here we go. Ready? OK. V ups in three two, one, go. Perfect. Really good synchronizing that upper body and that lower body. Obviously, the closer you get the two halves of your body, the more tension you're going to feel, the harder it's going to be. Ready, Shawn? Three, two, one. Perfect. You're killing it. OK?

Ready? We're going to move into those side oblique crunches, OK? We're going to-- changed my mind. We're going to do 10 seconds on one side, 10 seconds on the other. 20 seconds on one side is quite a long time.

So ready? Here we go in three two, one, go. Really squeeze that core. He does such a good job at making this look easy, but I'm with you all. And I feel you. And it's not easy. So three, two, one. Good.

Flip it over to the other side. OK, ready? Here we go-- 10 seconds in three two, one, go. During this angle, you can go ahead and see how he's on his side, really focusing on squeezing those obliques, keeping those legs in a straight line. Three, two, one. Perfect, Shawn.

Ready? We're moving into that plank with an opposite limb lift. Ready? OK. 20 seconds in three two, one, go. Good. Really slow and controlled. During these especially, your torso will want to rotate. So really, really fight that urge to let it rotate and really focus on trying to keep your spine in a straight line. And he's doing a really good job of that.

Shawn, ready? In three two one. Good. How are you feeling?

SHAWN FIELD: I'm tired.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Good. Obviously, if you do this three or four times, you're going to be tired. You're going to be feeling it. That core is going to be super strong.

Moving into scorpion kicks, OK? OK. Last set. Last set. Ready? 20 seconds. Here we go. Three, two, one, go.

So during these 20 seconds, because you are lowering down so slow, you'll probably get in five or six reps or so, tops. So we've already been going for 10 seconds, and he's done two. So pick a number. Shoot for that number, and just really focus on it. Really good job, Shawn. Here we go. One more. Give us one more good one. Three, two, one. Killed it. Killed it.

So as we kind of discussed in the beginning, if you have any questions, you can go ahead and leave those. But as we discussed in the beginning, these are one little segment of the workout. So you have five exercises in each circuit, three circuits total. We went through each circuit one time.

So what we challenge you to do if you're trying to build the strongest core at home is to go through each circuit three to four times. Obviously, you're going to take a little bit of a break in between. As you can see, they're tiring. So take a little bit of a break in between. Bring that heart rate back down. Focus on your breathing. Deep breaths in and out. And then repeat it three to four times. And as you do this over time, you'll definitely see your core improve, and you'll definitely see some changes.

SHAWN FIELD: One of the things to remember here is that these exercises, these movements, they're all for time, right? So I don't care how slow or how many reps you do, right? It's not about if you can do 10 scorpion kicks in 30 seconds. If you can do one scorpion kick in 20 seconds, that's awesome. That means it took you 20 seconds to fight against gravity, right? That's more work than 30 of them.

Sorry. I'm still out of breath. But yeah. It's for time, right? Remember that. It's about how hard you can get your body to work in that short amount of time.

EMELEE CRONINGER: So there is a concept, going along with what Shawn said. It has to do with time under tension, OK? And one of the trainings that I went to-- dead bugs, we demonstrated that here today-- we had three minutes to do as few dead bugs as we could. Doesn't sound like it'd be that hard, right? Oh, my gosh. It was so freaking hard, because the time under tension. Your muscles are under tension for a long time. And when your muscles are under tension for that amount of time, they get stronger. And when they get stronger, it's going to hurt a little bit. If it didn't hurt, everyone would do it.

So I challenge you to do these circuits at home. Really awesome job doing them at home.

SHAWN FIELD: Yeah. Like she was saying, you get stronger, the workouts get easier, right? Every time you do one of the workouts, start to progress a little bit. Maybe do the beginner circuit and then throw in one of the intermediate moves, right, until you're all the way through the intermediate circuit. Then throw in one of the complex moves.

Yeah. You get stronger. They get easier. And, eventually, you'll be able to do the hard circuit like it's nothing.

EMELEE CRONINGER: Perfect. All right. Well, thank you so much for listening in on our livestream. We had a lot of fun presenting this. If you have any questions, you can go ahead and send that into the live chat. And other than that, thank you so much for allowing us to reach out to WSU's global students.