

Crunch

ABDOMINALS / BODYWEIGHT

A short-range trunk-flexion exercise performed lying on your back. Curl the upper back rather than sitting all the way up. The movement trains abdominal contraction and control.

Three phases of the movement



01 Lie on your back

Bend the knees and plant the feet. Cross your arms over your chest.



02 Curl the upper back

Bring the ribs toward the pelvis. Relax the neck and lift the shoulder blades off the floor.



03 Return slowly

Keep the lower back, tailbone and feet grounded. Control the return all the way down.

FORM FOCUS

Slowly curl the upper back using your abdominals.

Technique and training notes

Equipment: bodyweight. Place a thin mat on the floor.

Muscles and their roles

PRIMARY

Rectus abdominis

Shortens the distance between the rib cage and pelvis.

ASSISTING

Internal and external obliques

Assist trunk flexion.

STABILIZING

Deep core muscles, including transversus abdominis

Help maintain abdominal tension and position.

How to move

01 Set your feet and arms

Lie on your back with knees bent and feet about hip-width apart. Let the knees separate comfortably. Cross the arms over the chest.

02 Brace gently

Lightly tighten your abdomen and relax your neck and shoulders. Keep the neck long; do not force your chin into your chest.

03 Exhale and curl

Bring the ribs toward the pelvis and lift the head, shoulders and shoulder blades. Do not rise all the way into a sitting position.

04 Return with control

Pause briefly at the top, then inhale as you lower slowly. Keep feet, tailbone and lower back grounded. Do not bounce or use momentum.

KEY CUES

- Use the abdomen to lift the upper back.
- Relax the neck and shoulders.
- Move slowly both up and down.

COMMON ERRORS

- ! Bending only the head forcefully forward.
- ! Swinging the arms for momentum.
- ! Feet lifting or rising into a full sit-up.

BREATHING: Exhale as you curl and inhale as you return. **ADJUSTMENT:** Begin with a small range driven by the abdomen; do not force yourself higher. End the set if your form breaks down. Crunches are one form of core training.

Stop if pain occurs. Work within a comfortable range and do not force the movement.

REFERENCES / LINKS FROM THE ORIGINAL JAPANESE GUIDE

ACE Exercise Library: [Crunch](#)

Mayo Clinic: [Video - Abdominal crunch](#)

ATHLEAN-X: [How To Do Crunches The Right Way](#)

NASM: [Progressive Core Training](#)