

Reverse Crunch

Bent-knee mat version with arms beside the body

Key positions



1. Start: knees above the hips



2. Curl the pelvis gently

Muscles worked

Main muscles

- Rectus abdominis curls the pelvis toward the rib cage.

Supporting muscles

- Obliques and other core muscles assist pelvic and trunk control.
- Hip flexors contribute to raising and positioning the legs.

What makes it useful

A bodyweight abdominal exercise emphasizing pelvic motion and controlled lowering. Curl the pelvis instead of swinging the legs; it does not isolate lower abs or selectively remove belly fat.

Movement & technique

Reverse Crunch | Keep the knees bent. Curl the pelvis gently and return slowly.

Before you start

Place a nonslip mat on a stable floor with space for your whole body. Begin without weights, with room to support your head, shoulders and arms.

1 Establish support

Lie on your back with head and shoulders resting comfortably. Place your arms slightly out beside you, palms down. Bend your knees and gently brace your abdomen.

2 Set the bent-knee start

Lift your feet slowly until the knees sit approximately above your hips. Keep the knees comfortably bent around a right angle and both feet airborne. Breathe normally.

3 Exhale and curl the pelvis

Exhale and curl the pelvis toward your ribs, lifting the hips slightly. Maintain the knee bend while thighs move naturally. Keep head, shoulders and upper back supported; avoid momentum.

4 Inhale and return with control

Inhale and lower the pelvis slowly to the mat. Return the knees above your hips, keeping control rather than throwing the legs away or arching your lower back.

Form reminders

- Move the pelvis toward the ribs; avoid leg swings or pushing hard through the palms.
- Maintain the knee bend while allowing the thighs to move naturally with the pelvis.
- Keep head, shoulders, upper back and arms supported; avoid rolling onto the neck.
- Lower slowly and return the knees above the hips without throwing the legs away.

Finish safely

- Stop for back, neck or hip pain or dizziness. Reduce range and seek coaching if you cannot control the movement.
- Avoid forced maximum curls, shoulder stands, pressing through the head or neck, swinging legs, or dropping the hips abruptly.

References

1. ACE - Reverse Ab Crunch (www.acefitness.org)
2. NASM - Reverse Crunch / Best Abs Exercises (www.nasm.org)
3. ACE - Abdominal EMG Study (2001) (www.acefitness.org)
4. Well+Good - Reverse Crunch (movement reference) (www.youtube.com)