

Core Yoga Challenge 1: 12 Weeks To Sculpt A 6 Pack




Image	Pose	Description
	Ujjayi Breath	<p>Close mouth. As you exhale through nose direct the out-going breath slowly across the back of your throat with a drawn-out HA sound.</p> <p>Benefits: Focuses awareness on breath preventing mind from wandering.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/kQA_VQcJLv4?rel=0</p>
	Root Lock Mula Bandha	<p>Sit or stand. On exhale gently pull up area between anus and genitals. Do not hold breath.</p> <p>Benefits: Mula Bandha is a way to contain and channel energy associated with the mula-dhara (root place) chakra. Represents stage of consciousness for survival. Pelvic floor gains strength. Calms the autonomic nervous system.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/qgHt9y0RPGg?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Set a root chakra themed intention such as: grounding, trust yourself, release fear, balance, let go, surrender, compassion, unconditional love.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnancy. Intestinal disorders.</p>
	Mountain	<p>Stand with feet hip-width apart. Tuck chin in. Legs slightly bent. Shoulders back and down.</p> <p>Benefits: Improves posture and concentration. Strengthens legs. Engages core. Strengthens your thighs, knees, and ankles. Firms your abdomen and buttocks. Relieves sciatica. Reduces flat feet.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/nwiyZSmfpWY?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: A) Palms together in prayer mudra behind the back. B) Hands raised over your head. C) Eyes closed. D) Samashtithi (feet together). E) Feet hip-distance apart. F) Rock gently back and forth and side to side. G) Block between the thighs. H) Palms together in front of the chest in prayer mudra. I) Interlace fingers and extend arms straight in front of you (shoulder stretch).-</p> <p>Precautions : Avoid locking the knees out (allow your knees to soften).</p>




Image	Pose	Description
	Standing Side Bend Arms Up	<p>Stand in Mountain. Raise right arm above head. Stretch over to left. Repeat on other side.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches sides of torso and spine. Stimulates abs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/03LTsK22NYk?rel=0</p>
	Standing Crescent	<p>Stand in Mountain. Step feet together with big toes touching. Heels half an inch apart. Sweep arms above head. Press hands together in prayer. Inhale. Exhale while bending to the left. Keep feet rooted and Inner core engaged as you breathe into right side body. Repeat on opposite side.</p> <p>Alternatives: Standing Side Stretch.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches sides of torso and spine. Stimulates abs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/FWsL4uTuzR0</p> <p>Modifications: Spin chest toward ceiling and look up.</p> <p>Precautions : Hip, shoulder, or neck injuries.</p>
	Extended Side Angle	<p>Start in Downward Facing Dog. Step right foot forward next to right hand. Bend right knee. Right hand inside right foot. Left arm up (form line with body). Open chest. Repeat on left.</p> <p>Alternatives: High or Low Lunge.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches legs, groins, and hamstrings. Opens chest and shoulders.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/0lfzG9jH6cM</p> <p>Modifications: A) Using wall for back support. B) Using wall for extended arm support. C) Block placed by foot. D) Place a chair in front of bent knee for extra support making sure chair does not move. E) Place bent thigh over a chair. F) Keep arm on thigh (instead of placing palm on the mat). G) Gaze down instead of up. H) Place hand in front of foot instead of behind.</p> <p>Precautions : Knee injury.</p>

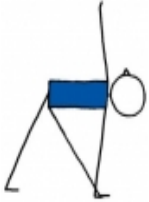
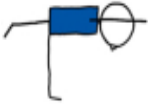

Image	Pose	Description
	Extended Triangle	<p>From Warrior II straighten front leg (right leg). Reach right arm forward. Drop right hand onto shin or ankle. Left shoulder stacks on top of right. Reach left fingertips upwards. Gaze at fingertips. Slightly bend right knee. Repeat on left.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthen legs. Stretches groins, hams, hips. Chest opener.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/6xKznn99qd4?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Use a block.</p>
	Warrior III	<p>From Mountain take a big step forward with right foot. Shift weight onto right leg. Raise arms overhead. Interlace fingers. Lift left leg. Gaze at a point on floor. Repeat on other side.</p> <p>Alternatives: Warrior I & II</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens legs, shoulders, back. Tones abdominals. Balance.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/4PjcQJjOvBc?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: A) Arms out to sides. B) Arms back. C) Hands on blocks. D) Hands on wall. E) Hands on back of chair.</p> <p>Precautions : High blood pressure.</p>
	Goddess Tip Toes Aakash	<p>Stand tall. Arms by sides. Step feet out wide. Turn toes out slightly. Bend knees and lower hips into a squat. Thighs parallel to floor, but not into a deep squat. Tuck tailbone. Press hips forwards. Draw thighs back. Knees in line with toes. Soften shoulders. Gaze softly.</p> <p>Hands in Aakash Mudra (Join and press tip of third finger with a tip of thumb. Keep remaining 3 fingers straight.). Raise up on toes.</p> <p>Benefits: Hip and chest opener. Strengthens thighs, buttocks, hamstrings.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/wgXefCprLm0</p> <p>Modifications: A) If squat is difficult sit on front edge of chair. B) Come onto tiptoes. C) Hands resting on thighs without Aakash Mudra. D) Raise up on toes and cross arms. Gaze down at mat. E) Goddess with a twist. F) Back against a wall. G) Gentle Goddess (don't lower into full squat). H) Raise arms overhead. I) Raise arms parallel to the mat with palms facing away and fingers pointed up. J) Goddess pose with eagle arms (arms interlocked).</p> <p>Precautions : Knee, leg or shoulder injury.</p>




Image	Pose	Description
	End Of Sequence	
	Staff	<p>Sit with legs crossed. Elongate through spine. Straighten legs. Press into heels. Toes point towards face. Palms on tops of thighs (help draw thighs down). Tops of thighs draw in to engage legs. Lift chest up (open heart). Draw belly button towards spine.</p> <p>Alternatives: A) Arms overhead. B) Staff with a twist. C) Sit on a folded blanket. D) Sit with back against a wall. E) Sandbags across tops of thighs. F). Staff with arms up. G) Staff with backend.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens back muscles. Stretches shoulders and chest.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/sXz00CjO3p4?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: A) Arms overhead. B) Staff with a twist. C) Sit on a folded blanket. D) Sit with back against a wall. E) Sandbags across tops of thighs.</p> <p>Precautions : Any lower back injury.</p>
	Half Boat	<p>Sit with straight legs. Press hands on floor behind hips. Fingers point to feet. Lift legs with knees bent.</p> <p>Alternatives: Boat pose.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens abs, hip flexors, spine.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/reru9O8KrX0?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: A) Boat Pose On Chair. B) Boat Pose With Strap (around upper back and feet). C) Double Boat Pose (partner yoga). D) Half Boat With Eagle Arms.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnancy. Neck injury.</p>




Image	Pose	Description
	Knees To Chest	<p>Lie on back. Legs and arms extended. Both knees to chest. Clasp hands around knees. Wrap forearms over shins. Clasp each elbow with opposite hand. Keep back flat on mat. Release shoulder blades down toward waist. Draw tailbone and sacrum down. Lengthening spine. Softly rock backward and forward or side-to-side for a spinal massage. Tuck chin slightly. Gaze down. Hold. Release.</p> <p>Benefits: Massages spin. Lower back stretch. Good for posture. Relieves tired legs. Strengthens back. Firms abdominals. Strengthens legs and hips. Cures joint pains. Improves blood circulation in legs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/TVk4ht8V8J8</p> <p>Modifications: Knee to chest.</p>
	Supine Knees Bent	<p>Lie on back. Knees bent. Legs and arms out wide. Palms up. Release lower back to floor. Close eyes. Abdomen rises on inhale and falls on exhale. Feel heavy with each exhalation.</p> <p>Alternatives: Crocodile. Child.</p> <p>Benefits: Tune into body. Calm. Tranquil. Inner Peace. Clarity.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/gGT2PmZ84Wg</p> <p>Modifications: Knees up. Blanket under knees. Blanket under head.</p>
	Supine Arms Behind	<p>Lie on back. Knees bent. Palms up. Release lower back to floor. Raise arms overhead until they touch the floor behind you.</p> <p>Alternatives: Crocodile. Child.</p> <p>Benefits: Tune into body. Calm. Tranquil. Inner Peace. Clarity.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/OElallUN01Q</p> <p>Modifications: Knees up. Blanket under knees and/or head.</p>


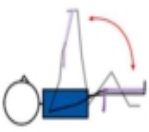

Image	Pose	Description
	Sacral Circles	<p>Lie on back with legs and arms extended. Draw both knees to chest. Clasp hands around knees. Keep back flat on mat. Release shoulder blades down toward waist. Draw tailbone and sacrum down toward mat. Lengthen spine. Clock-wise circles with knees.</p> <p>Benefits: Massages spin. Lower back stretch. Good for posture. Relieves tired legs. Strengthens back. Firms abdominals. Strengthens legs and hips. Cures joint pains. Improves blood circulation in legs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/TWG_79QF4_E</p>
	Leg Up II Strap	<p>Lie on back with knees bent. Press left thigh down and stretch right leg out. Bend right leg and grasp big toe with first two fingers and thumb (or use a strap). Straighten leg. Hold. Lower. Repeat on left leg.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches hips, thighs, hams, calves. Relieves sciatica.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/GzToob_gGUk?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Blanket under head.</p>
	Supine Knees Bent	<p>Lie on back. Knees bent. Legs and arms out wide. Palms up. Release lower back to floor. Close eyes. Abdomen rises on inhale and falls on exhale. Feel heavy with each exhalation.</p> <p>Alternatives: Crocodile. Child.</p> <p>Benefits: Tune into body. Calm. Tranquil. Inner Peace. Clarity.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/gGT2PmZ84Wg</p> <p>Modifications: Knees up. Blanket under knees. Blanket under head.</p>


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	Revolved Abdomen Twist	<p>Lie on back. Arms stretched out at shoulder height. Palms down. Bend knees. Feet flat on floor. Swing hips to left. Pull knees toward chest. Drop knees to floor on right side. Inhale. Lengthen spine. Lower shoulders to floor. Repeat on right.</p> <p>Benefits: Flexible spine. Digestion. Circulation.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/XKunL4LW4fc?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Keep legs straight. Cross legs. Hands behind head.</p>
	Rocking And Rolling	<p>Slit on edge of mat. Wrap arms around legs. Engage core. Round back. Tuck chin toward belly button. Roll back and forth without touching toes to floor (imagine there are hot coals on the floor).</p> <p>Alternatives: knee to chest.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches inner groin, spine.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/bUVGbaZHH_I</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnant. Knee injury.</p>




Image	Pose	Description
	Child	<p>Sit on heels. Walk hands forward until forehead touches floor. Arms alongside legs. Alternatives include: Child with head on bolster. Child with bolster between legs. Child pose with arms extended. Child with hands on back. Child with cheek on mat. Child with leg raised and arms extended.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches hips, thighs, and ankles. Relieves back pain.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/qYvYsFrTI0U</p> <p>Modifications: A) Interlock fingers behind back. B) Knees together (instead of separated). C) Curl the toes under (instead of flat). D) Place a rolled towel under your shins (take the stress off of your ankles). E) Place a yoga blanket underneath the knees for padding.-F) Place a folded towel underneath the knees for padding.-G) Place a bolster or pillow under your stomach or chest and stay for up 10 minutes. H) Go deeper into the hip stretch by spreading your knees wider.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnancy. Knee injury.</p>
	End Of Sequence	
	Cat Cow	<p>Sit with buttocks on heels. Come onto all fours. Wrists under shoulders. Pull navel into small of back. Inhale while raising head. Exhale, while lowering head and arching spine up like a cat. Repeat.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches lower back. Engage core. Decompress spine.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/kqnua4rHVVA</p> <p>Modifications: Knee to chest. Raise leg or arm.</p> <p>Precautions : Neck injury.</p>



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	Table Top	<p>Come onto hands and knees. Bring knees hip-width apart. Palms directly under shoulders. Fingers facing forward. Gaze down. Flat back. Press into palms to drop shoulders away from ears. Press tail bone towards back wall and crown of head towards front wall.</p> <p>Benefits: Transition for many floor postures. Lengthens spine.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/PGAntbDQ6Xg</p> <p>Modifications: A) Make fists with hands (reduce pressure on wrists). B) Raise an arm. C) Raise one arm and the opposite leg. D) Folded towel or a wedge under the heels of your hands. E) Folded blanket or a yoga mat under your knees. F) Cat-Cow pose.</p> <p>Precautions : Wrist, knee or neck pain.</p>




Image	Pose	Description
	Downward Facing Dog Knees Bent	<p>Start in Mountain. Forward bend. Step feet back one at time. Lift buttocks. Lengthen spine. Bend knees. Tuck chin in. Look at feet. Release jaw.</p> <p>Alternatives: Down Dog. Dolphin.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches spine, hams, shoulders. Calms nervous system.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/GuxnalclLFQ</p> <p>Modifications: Use wall. Head on block. Leg up. Arm up. Wide stance.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnant. HBP. Headache.</p>
	Table Top	<p>Come onto hands and knees. Bring knees hip-width apart. Palms directly under shoulders. Fingers facing forward. Gaze down. Flat back. Press into palms to drop shoulders away from ears. Press tail bone towards back wall and crown of head towards front wall.</p> <p>Benefits: Transition for many floor postures. Lengthens spine.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/PGAntbDQ6Xg</p> <p>Modifications: A) Make fists with hands (reduce pressure on wrists). B) Raise an arm. C) Raise one arm and the opposite leg. D) Folded towel or a wedge under the heels of your hands. E) Folded blanket or a yoga mat under your knees. F) Cat-Cow pose.</p> <p>Precautions : Wrist, knee or neck pain.</p>
	Knees Chest Chin	<p>Begin in Plank Pose. Shoulders directly above wrists. Lower knees to floor. Keep toes tucked under. Hug elbows in. Keeping hips lifted and palms flat, bring chest to mat. Touch chin to mat.</p> <p>Alternatives: Dolphin.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens arms, wrists, spine. Tones abs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/UHvIaMSH-GI?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Knees on floor.</p> <p>Precautions : Carpal tunnel syndrome. Pregnancy.</p>


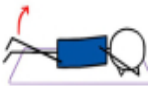
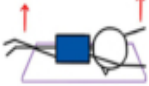
Image	Pose	Description
	Sphinx	<p>Lie on belly. Legs together. Buttocks firm. Legs active. Elbows under shoulders. Forearms on floor. Lift upper torso and head up.</p> <p>Alternatives: Crocodile. Locust.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches chest, shoulders, and abs. Firms buttocks. Spine mobility.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/xPDs-zylsWI</p> <p>Modifications: A) Wall Sphinx (stand facing a wall then place forearms and palms against it). B) Plank To Sphinx (start in Plank and lower to Sphinx). C) One leg raised.</p> <p>Precautions : Back Injury. Headache.</p>
	Prone Leg Raise	<p>Lie flat on stomach. Feet together. Forehead on floor. Rest chin on floor. Stretch chin slightly forward. Soften front of body. Both hands under thighs (or place head on folded arms). Slowly lift leg on an inhale. Switch legs.</p> <p>Alternatives: Legs up wall. Full locust.</p> <p>Benefits: Tones back muscles. Stimulate lower back.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/DumG6KyWSjs</p> <p>Modifications: 1 leg up. Wide legs. Hands under body, to side or in front.</p> <p>Precautions : HBP. Hernia. Back injury.</p>
	Prone Leg Arm Raises	<p>Lie face down with forehead resting on mat. Align neck and head. Extend arms in front of you with palms facing down. Lengthen torso by stretching neck away from body. Engage abs. Keep head in line with upper back and raise left arm and right leg 6 inches. Hold. Lower to start. Raise right arm and left leg. Keep alternating.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens shoulders, spine, buttocks, hamstrings. Tones abs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/YrrnXPh3gb8</p> <p>Precautions : Neck and back injury. Headache.</p>





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	Locust	<p>Lie flat on stomach. Feet together. Forehead on floor. Place arms by sides. Palms up. Stretch chin slightly forward. Rest chin on floor. Soften front of body. Lift chest, legs, arms off floor. Extend fingertips towards toes. Look straight ahead.</p> <p>Alternatives: Legs up wall.</p> <p>Benefits: Tones back muscles. Stimulate lower back.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/582eV71P1sQ?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: 1 leg up. Wide legs. Hands under body, to side or in front.</p> <p>Precautions : High blood pressure. Hernia. Back injury.</p>
	Child	<p>Sit on heels. Walk hands forward until forehead touches floor. Arms alongside legs. Alternatives include: Child with head on bolster. Child with bolster between legs. Child pose with arms extended. Child with hands on back. Child with cheek on mat. Child with leg raised and arms extended.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches hips, thighs, and ankles. Relieves back pain.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/qYvYsFrTI0U</p> <p>Modifications: A) Interlock fingers behind back. B) Knees together (instead of separated). C) Curl the toes under (instead of flat). D) Place a rolled towel under your shins (take the stress off of your ankles). E) Place a yoga blanket underneath the knees for padding.-F) Place a folded towel underneath the knees for padding.-G) Place a bolster or pillow under your stomach or chest and stay for up 10 minutes. H) Go deeper into the hip stretch by spreading your knees wider.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnancy. Knee injury.</p>
	End Of Sequence	

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	Crocodile	<p>Relax on stomach. Arms folded on floor above head. Widen legs. Roll feet so heels point in. Squeeze buttocks. Press pelvis into floor. Rest forehead on arms.</p> <p>Alternatives: Leg or arm lift.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches back, legs, buttocks. Reduce stress. Improve posture.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/MZynS2i3n28?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Place forehead in Yoni Mudra.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnancy.</p>

Lesson Plan Description:

Why such devotion to such a small area of the body?

Because a strong *rectus abdominis*-(core) has a myriad of glorious benefits such as:

- Improved balance and stability
- Prevention of back problems
- Strengthened diaphragm which plays an essential role in deep breathing
- Improved digestion
- Improved heart health (excess fat around the belly is dangerous)
- Better posture (a strong core keeps your back stable which improves posture)

Weakness in the core can result in:

- Lower back pain (a whopping 1 in 4 people experience regular lower back pain).
- Over rotations in the vertebrae of the lower back (which can lead to degenerative disk disease and arthritis).
- Digestive fires being weak (this can cause chronic exhaustion because you're not absorbing nutrients properly).

If you don't know how to get centred in your core, you can easily turn into a doormat for anyone with a strong personality. With a weak core you can become easy pickings for anyone who wants to push you off balance, whether it's a controlling family member or an advert on the TV trying to get you to buy something that harms your body.-

The good news is that every asana is potentially a core-strengthening exercise, if you engage your core (pull abs toward spine). And even more good news is that core abdominal strength improves nearly every pose, offering a sense of balance and ease.