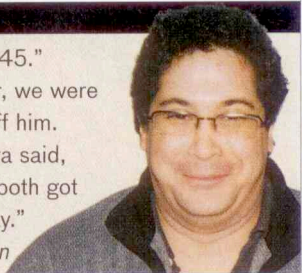


Whaddaya Bench?

Each month, we stop a stranger in the gym and put him to the ultimate test

"I was banging out sets before you guys were born," said 35-year-old **computer tech Louis Radifera** as he was loading up a bar. "Slide a deuce on this bad boy—

I'm going for 245."
Half a rep later, we were deadlifting it off him.
"Well," Radifera said, "looks like we both got a workout today."
—Sean Hyson



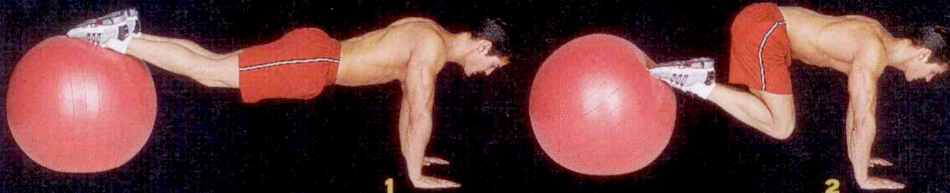
Abs: In Depth

Most guys make two mistakes in their quest for the ultimate six-pack. (That is, *besides* starting their diet “tomorrow.”) They use exercises—crunches, for instance—that work their abs through only a portion of their natural movement, and typically use only their body weight for resistance. That limits gains, since they’re not working their midsection muscles maximally. This workout is designed to eliminate those blunders by forcing your abs to contract through a full range of motion and adding extra weight—in the ideal order. The end result: You’ll work your abs for the same amount of time but with vastly improved results.

Straight-back Jackknife

Get into pushup position—your hands set slightly wider than and in line with your shoulders—but instead of placing your feet on the floor, rest your shins on a Swiss ball. With your arms straight and your back flat, your body

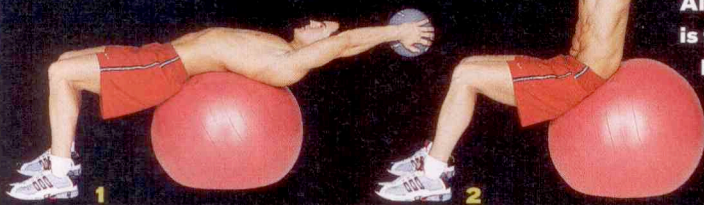
should form a straight line from your shoulders to your ankles [1]. Keeping your back straight (don’t round it), roll the Swiss ball as close to your chest as possible by contracting your abs and pulling it forward [2]. Pause, then return the ball



Long-arm Weighted Swiss-ball Crunch

Lie on your back on a Swiss ball, with your arms extended straight above your head—so they’re in line with your ears—holding a medicine ball or

dumbbell [1]. Raise your head, shoulders, and back, and crunch your rib cage toward your pelvis [2]. Pause and slowly return to the starting position.



If you find this workout too challenging, check out our six-part beginners’ ab series at mensfitness.com. Designed by **IAN KING, C.S.C.S.**, it will help you get the ultimate six-pack.

Perform this workout three times per week, resting at least a day between each session. Do the exercises as alternating sets: Perform one set of the first exercise, rest 30 seconds, then perform one set of the second exercise and rest 30 seconds. Repeat three times for a total of four sets of each exercise.

to the starting position by rolling it backward. **Perform each set** in a rhythmic tempo for 40 to 50 seconds continuously. (Don’t worry about the number of reps; just try to maintain an even speed of movement for the entire exercise.)

Perform each set in a rhythmic tempo for 40 to 50 seconds continuously. (Don’t worry about the number of reps; just try to maintain an even speed of movement for the entire exercise.)

Alwyn Cosgrove, C.S.C.S., is the owner of Results-Fitness Training in Santa Clarita, Calif. (alwyncosgrove.com).

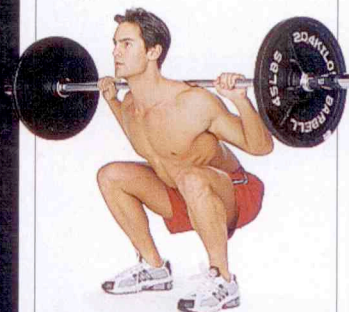
No Pain, All Gain

MF teaches you right from wrong, exercise by exercise, every month

Bad

BENDING FORWARD ON THE SQUAT

Bow at the end of karate class, not in the middle of a barbell squat. Bending forward and rounding your back in an attempt to squat deeper **puts too much stress on your lower back and can lead to injury**. It also shifts emphasis away from your quads, typically your main target in a barbell squat.



GOOD: Upright.

Good

SQUAT WITH YOUR BACK UPRIGHT

Your back should also stay naturally arched throughout the movement. **Here’s how to gauge your upper-body position:** Sit on a flat bench with your torso upright. Move your feet toward you until they’re bent about 105 degrees (your lower legs will almost be perpendicular with the floor). Without changing the arch in your back, lean forward until you can stand straight up without moving your torso backward or forward, and without feeling off balance. Nothing else means squat!

Whaddya Bench?

Each month, we stop a stranger and put him to the ultimate test

“Lord, give me strength,” said 32-year-old zealot **Jehkaro Bailey** when we caught him coming out of church and asked him to take our bar exam. Once in the gym, he brought a wobbly 250 pounds down to his chest and declared, “**This one’s for you, J.C.**” Alas, the bar never returned to the rack. When we stripped it to 200, a disappointed Bailey finally completed a rep. “Forgiveness! The devil got in me.”

