



Standing, Sitting, or Lying Alternating Elbow-to-Knee: Abdominals

Disclaimer: You should discuss your health risks, previous injuries, and current treatments with your provider or physical therapist before starting any exercise program.

- These abdominal exercises can be performed lying on the ground/bed, sitting in a chair, or standing. The standing exercises are the most difficult, as it requires you to balance yourself. Start lying down for the abdominal exercises. If you have difficulty lying down or getting up from the floor, start these exercises sitting in a stable chair. When you can do these easily (less than a 3-4/10 on the rating scale), move to the standing ones.
- It is important to avoid holding your breath during these exercises. Concentrate on breathing in and out or counting during the exercises.

Lying down:

- Bend your knees, with heels on the ground.
- Put both hands behind your head, with elbows pointing outward.
- Contract or tighten your stomach/abdominal muscles
- Lift your upper body off of the ground and reach your right elbow to your left knee. Pause.
- Slowly and with control, lower your upper body back to the starting position on the ground.
- Repeat the abdominal exercise, this time reaching your left elbow to your right knee.
- Continue to alternate or switch sides for 8-12 repetitions.

Sitting:

- Sit in a stable chair
- Scoot out to the end of the chair so that your buttocks are near the front edge.
- Lean back onto the back rest and place your hands behind your head.
- Contract or tighten your abdominal muscles and then sit up and twist, moving your right elbow towards your left knee. Your left knee should lift off the ground while your right elbow is reaching for it.
- Return to the starting position and repeat, this time with your left elbow reaching towards your right knee.
- Repeat 8-12 repetitions.

Standing:

- Standing with hips shoulder width apart, rotate your torso and bend an elbow on one side of the body and flex the hip of the other side of the body to bring one elbow to an opposite knee.
- Return to the starting position.
- Complete again using the opposite extremities.
- Perform 3 sets of 12 repetitions on each side.

Advancement:

- You are ready to add weight when you can easily perform 3 sets of 12 repetitions on each side without difficulty, or you rate the difficulty of the exercise as 1-2 on a scale of 0-10. You can advance the exercise by holding 1-2 lb. dumbbells in each hand to increase the intensity of the exercise.

Precautions/Contraindications:

- This exercise is not to be completed if bony metastases are present in the vertebral column.
- This exercise is not to be completed if bony metastases are present in any of the lower extremity or upper extremity bones utilized during this exercise and its variants.

The following videos demonstrate abdominal exercises.

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