

Go ahead, drink open your mouth to collect liquid like a sponge.

Try this unconventional approach to ab training and get visible results with less work!

FLAT & FABULOUS ABS

In Five Minutes A Day

BY PEGGY HALL | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT REIFF

If you're a hard-core fitness buff, you probably set aside one or two days a week to really hit your abs hard. After all, isn't that what you need to do to sculpt your six-pack? Meet Harley Pasternak, a Canadian-born fitness and nutrition consultant who has been transforming the bodies of celebrities and regular folk alike from his home base in West Hollywood, California. He'll tell you that training your abs for five minutes a day, five days a week may be just the thing to take your midsection from flabby to fabulous!

Author of the top selling book *Five Factor Fitness* (Putnam Adult, 2004), Pasternak recommends performing one – yes, just one – exercise each day that targets the abs from a specific angle: either front, back, lateral (side-to-side) or transverse (twisting). "You need to train on different planes of movement," Pasternak explains, "so you can look good from every angle!"

That means working not only the attention-grabbing rectus abdominis (the much-coveted six-pack) but also the internal and external obliques (love-handles area) as well as the transverse abdominis, the deep,

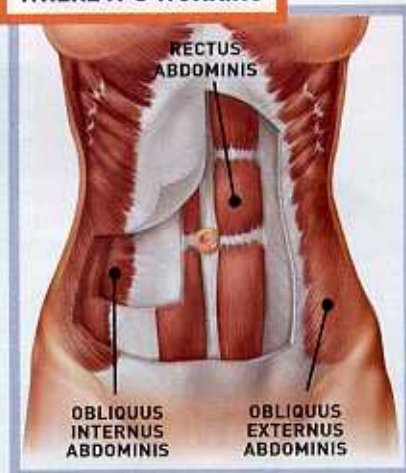
corset-like muscle which compresses the abdominal wall. When you train your abs from all angles, you'll experience increased core strength, a better definition of your six-pack and a smaller, tighter waistline.

But how can only five minutes of ab training possibly yield any visible results? Pasternak explains: "Overtraining the abs not only leads to back injuries and poor posture, but it often results in a puffy, bloated look. Usually this happens when you're training on just one plane, putting all your efforts into the rectus abdominis." His solution? "Do a little bit every day, training to failure but not beyond," so the abs can recover sufficiently for the next session.

Be sure to keep the burn entirely in the abs by isolating the "pivot point" of your movement. Nothing else should be jerking or moving. If you're doing cable crunches for example, make sure you are initiating the movement from your abdomen, not your neck and shoulders. Inhale on the easy portion of the exercise and exhale on the exertion, flattening your abdomen to stabilize and protect your lower back.

Perform your chosen ab exercise

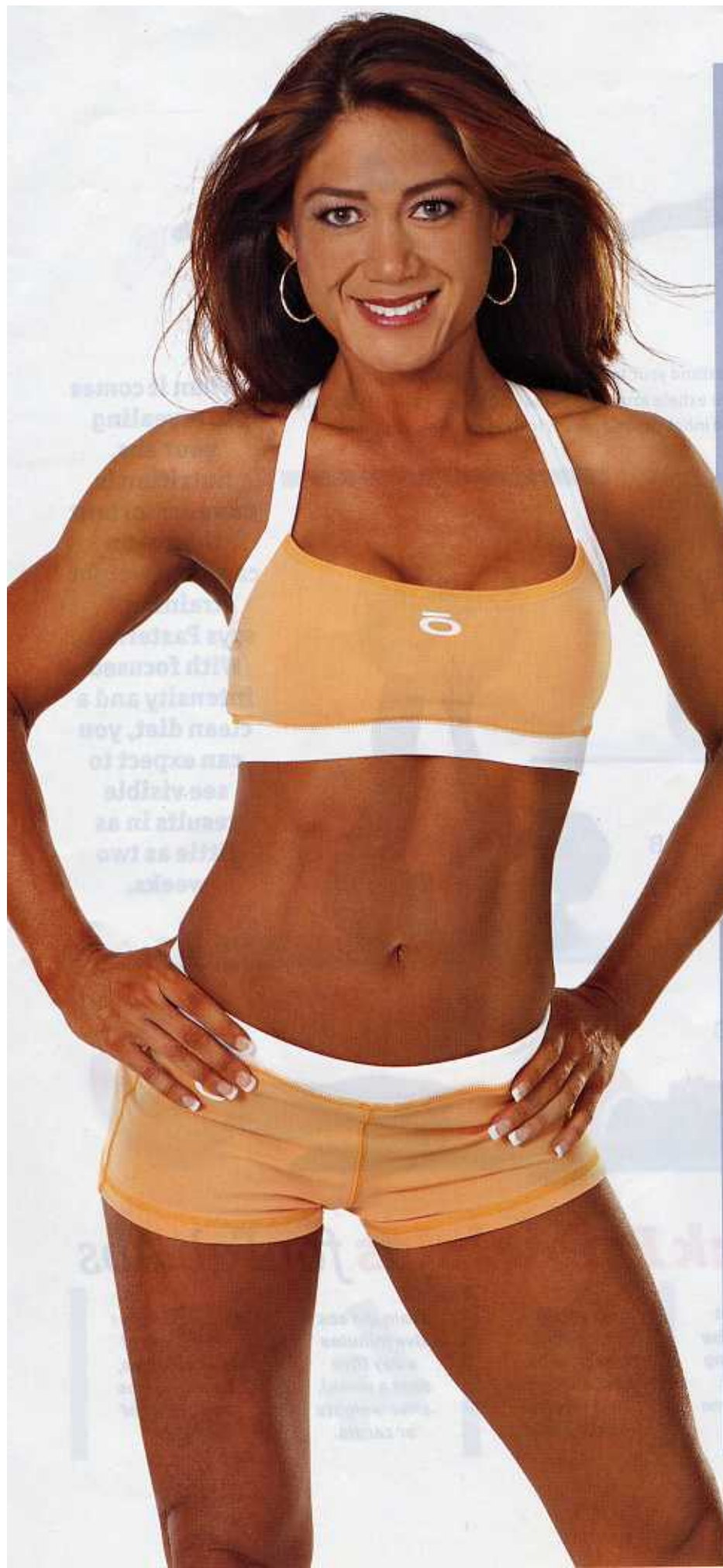
WHERE IT'S WORKING



after cardio or weight training, using different reps, sets, resistance and rest intervals each week. "Always work your abs last," Pasternak says, "because they stabilize your core. If you fatigue them early on in your workout, you might compromise your back."

Here, fitness pro Zena Collins demonstrates five effective exercises. "I like to have lots of variety," she says, training her abs anywhere in the 15 to 30 rep range. At five-foot-two and 113 pounds (competition weight), the 34-year-old says that while she may not be genetically blessed with well-defined abs, "hard work does pay off!"

MODEL: ZENA COLLINS; CLOTHING: FAREMON; LOCATION: B&B STUDIO COLUMBUS, OHIO



HITTING THE ABS

FROM EVERY ANGLE

Front:

CABLE CRUNCHES Kneel with your back to the cable machine and grasp the handles. Inhale to prepare and exhale as you draw your rib cage toward your hips. Focus on your abs doing the work, not your arms.

REVERSE CRUNCHES Lie on your back with your legs raised and your knees bent. Place your hands under your hips or behind your head. On an exhale, flatten your abdomen and curl your hips off the floor. Pause for a moment and lower with control.

Back:

FOREARM BRIDGE Place your forearms on the floor with your elbows under your shoulders. Extend your legs and engage your core. Breathe, contracting your abdomen with each exhale. Hold for 45 to 60 seconds.

BALL ROLL-OUTS Kneel in front of a stability ball and place your hands on the ball. On an exhale, roll the ball away from you, keeping your spine straight; inhale and return to starting position.

Lateral:

SIDE BRIDGE Lie on your side and place your right forearm on the floor with your elbow under your shoulder. As you exhale, lift your hips off the floor. Pause for moment and lower your hips without touching the floor. Repeat for reps before switching sides.

SIDE BENDS Hold a pair of light dumbbells and stand with your feet hip-width apart. On an exhale move laterally to the left, sliding your left hand farther down your leg. Inhale, return to center and repeat on the other side.

Transverse:

SEATED OBLIQUE TWISTS Sit on the end of a bench and place an unweighted barbell across your upper back. Exhale as you twist to the right, keeping your hips stationary. Inhale and move through the center; exhale and twist to the left.

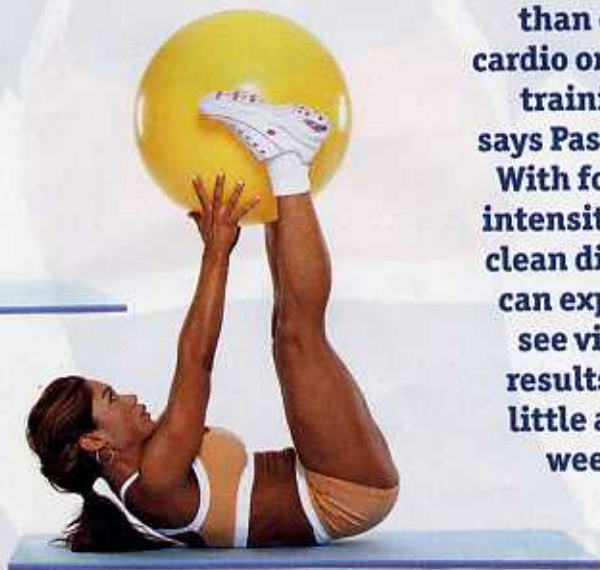
BICYCLE Lie on your back and interlace your hands behind your head. Draw both knees into your chest and curl your shoulder blades off the floor. On an exhale, extend your left leg as you twist your left elbow to your right knee. Inhale through center and exhale to switch sides.



back extension

Drape your torso over a stability ball and extend your legs into a wide V. Cross your arms in front of your chest. Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale arch your spine and lift your chest. Pause for a moment, contracting your abdomen, and inhale as you return to the starting position.

“When it comes to revealing your abs, nutrition is more important than even cardio or weight training,” says Pasternak. With focused intensity and a clean diet, you can expect to see visible results in as little as two weeks.



supine ball pass

Lie on your back, extend your legs overhead and hold a stability ball between your hands. Inhale to prepare. As you exhale, curl your shoulder blades and hips off the floor and pass the ball to your feet. Inhale as you slowly release your upper body and legs to the floor. Exhale and repeat, flattening your abdomen as you bring your arms and legs up overhead to pass the ball to your hands.

The **Pasternak Principles** for Fab Abs

1
Get your cardio in five days a week.

Execute just one ab exercise per day, hitting a different angle each time you train.

Vary the number of sets, reps, resistance and rest intervals each week.

Train the abs five minutes a day (five days a week), after weights or cardio.

Eat a clean diet consisting of lean proteins, healthy carbs and plenty of water.



A

stability ball crunch

Position yourself with the bottom of your shoulder blades on a stability ball. Keep your feet hip-width apart and your knees in line with your heels. Place your arms across your chest and firm your glutes. Inhale to prepare and exhale as you contract your abdomen to curl your upper body off the ball. Pause for a moment and then return to the starting position, resisting gravity to work the negative portion of the exercise.



B

bent-knee deadlifts

Grasp a pair of light dumbbells and stand with your feet hip-width apart. Inhale as you hinge at your hips and bend your knees to a 45-degree angle. Keep your back straight and your neck long. Exhale as you straighten your legs and return to standing.



A



B



bilateral spinal extension

Lie over a stability ball and extend your legs into a wide V. Inhale to prepare and exhale as you simultaneously extend your right leg and left arm away from your torso. Focus on a complete exhale to really engage the tummy-flattening transverse abdominis. Lower and repeat on the other side, moving in a controlled manner. ■