

What's Wrong With Situps

Contracting your Rectus Abdominus (front abs) involves pulling your sternum down to meet your pelvis. A situp simply emphasizes sitting up which does not primarily involve working the abs.

There is a group of muscles which run from the lower back around to the front of the thighs called the psoas major and minor. Their main action is to pull the thighs closer to the torso which is also the major movement in sitting up.

Because situps primarily work the psoas group they are an inefficient abdominal exercise. They are further inefficient because the psoas works best when the legs are nearly straight (as when people do situps). Situps primarily work the psoas group and the abs act as stabilizers. Finally, situps can be very stressful to your lower back and grind the vertebrae.

Take a good look at your core training program. If you're doing situps take them out and substitute in exercises that truly work the abdominals. Also, remember that there are many other muscles which form the core besides your abs. Finally, to make your core conditioning functional do some exercises standing up to mimic actual daily activities.

About the Author

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