



Tia Alexander

Height : 5'9" / 175 cm | Bust : 34" / 86 cm | Waist : 25" / 64 cm | Hips : 35" / 89 cm | Shoe : 9.5 US / 7.0 UK | Hair Colour : Dark Brown | Eyes : Brown



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TO SHRINK YOUR WAIST,
UPGRADE FROM CRUNCHES.
THIS MOVE WORKS YOUR
OBLIQUES 35 PERCENT MORE.



Getting strong, sleek abs takes the right mix of exercises that work together to tone the entire area. And no one knows better which formula works than Michele Olson, Ph.D., a professor of exercise physiology at Auburn University at Montgomery.

You can trust her: Over the past 25 years, Olson has studied countless abs exercises in a lab using electromyography (EMG) technology to measure the amount of muscle activated by each. The

resulting superworkout she crafted exclusively for SHAPE (pages 160–161) includes the all-stars—moves that scored off the charts for firming the most muscle fibers per rep. For instance, the Pilates double-leg stretch made the cut here because it activates 39 percent more of the deep ab muscle (transverse abdominis) than a traditional crunch and even beat out that perennial favorite, the Pilates hundred. Another move on our short list, the yoga boat pose, tones obliques better than anything out there—54 percent more so than a crunch. Olson then added standing side bends and rotational movements to create the most effective plan: These are key for toning the back muscles (such as the latissimus dorsi) that complete the full 360-degree squeeze on your center.

The best part? Instead of cranking out dozens of crunches, we're about to make under your ab routine. For the first two weeks, you'll do a couple of sets of just four moves; together they hit all four ab muscle groups. "You'll reach your goal faster if your workout builds on intensity and total reps done over time," Olson explains. These moves get a little harder and the reps get higher for week three, plus there's an exercise added in. Same for week four, except this time you'll add two more moves to your session. By that week, expect seven moves with the max challenge and reps. No sweat—you'll be ready.

STYLE NOTES
Forever 21 bra top
Lorna Jane leggings
Under Armour sneakers

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ONCE YOU'VE ACED YOUR AB ROUTINE, CHANGE IT. TAKE IT UP A NOTCH WITH NEW TWISTS LIKE A SPIDER PLANK.



TURN UP YOUR BURN
Regardless of how tight your abs muscles are, they can't erase belly fat that lies above (subcutaneous fat) or below them (visceral fat). Those you'll have to burn off—and we'll show you the fastest way to do just that.

According to Olson's research, the best belly fat-melting method is Tabata intervals: You do cardio (like running)

all out for 20 seconds, recover for 10 seconds, then repeat that combo seven more times, for a total of four minutes. Maximum-effort cardio intervals like these raise your level of adrenaline, the fight-or-flight hormone that's the secret sauce to burning fat. "Higher adrenaline levels cause fat cells to release more fat more efficiently," Olson notes. "Tabata releases more adrenaline throughout your body than typical cardio because of the high-intensity effort required."

It gets better. Not only do you burn more fat and calories during Tabata, but your body also continues to burn more even after you finish: in a study for the American College of Sports Medicine, Olson found that calorie burn half an hour post-Tabata is double what it would normally be at rest. Think of this afterburn as the cardio gift that keeps on giving.

To maximize the amount of belly fat you melt off in the next four weeks, do Olson's Tabata-inspired

cardio workout three times a week. Start with 10 minutes of moderately hard, steady-state cardio of your choice (power walk, run, bike, swim, use an elliptical trainer), then do a four-minute Tabata round. Complete that steady cardio-and-Tabata combo three times. That's 42 minutes total. "The steady-state segments ensure that you burn calories and melt subcutaneous fat," Olson says. "And the intense intervals do the same but also guarantee you'll work away at the deep, stubborn visceral fat."

On set styling by Melissa Phipps/Conceptual Artistry. Hair by Warren LeBaron/Barbara Barry. Makeup by Tia Alexander/Barbara Barry. Photo by David LaChapelle. Photo by David LaChapelle. Photo by David LaChapelle.

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THE FASTEST WAY TO BURN OFF BELLY FAT IS TO ADD QUICK BURSTS TO YOUR CARDIO. GO HARD FOR 20-SECOND INTERVALS.



STYLE NOTES
This page: H&M bra top, Lorna Jane shorts, Nike sneakers. Page 155: Nike bra top, Q&Q watch, Nike leggings.

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