



# ATHLETES INSIGHT

LEVEL UP  
YOUR LIFE

Issue 04 | 2017

10

**BEST ABS  
EXERCISES**  
YOU CAN DO AT HOME



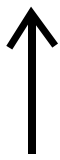
**MUSCLE  
MASS**  
IN A CALORIE  
DEFICIT

**ONE WILD RIDE:**

WITH ATHLETES INSIGHT FOUNDERS

**RICH + SARA**

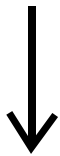
MASTER  
*Mental  
Health*  
IN 11 STEPS



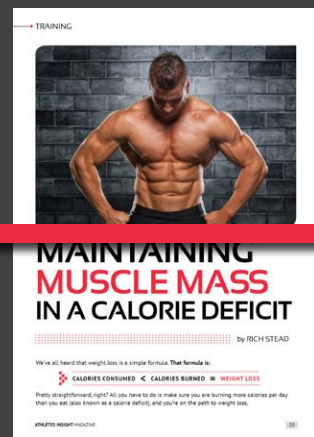
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# November 11th Veteran's Day 5k Global Race

**BUY 1 GET 1 FREE**

Will You Take The Challenge?



**ATHLETES  
INSIGHT**

ISSUE 04 | 2017

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# ATHLETES INSIGHT MAGAZINE



**A HIGH-PROTEIN DIET CAN HELP**

**TO PREVENT MUSCLE MASS BREAKDOWN**



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the latest issue of the Athletes Insight Magazine!

In this month's issue we are lifting the lid on the inner workings of Athletes Insight, including a sit down with myself and Sara, and why we do what we do.

We also take a closer look beyond the physical side of fitness, exploring mental health. **I think it's fair to say that time spent to understand ourselves properly**

**and develop a self-awareness of our behaviors is critical to knowing when to really push, and when to be a little kinder to oneself.** Be sure to check out our article on mastering mental health.

We are also really excited to announce the next Athletes Insight 5k Global Race, which is taking place on Veteran's Day in November (11<sup>th</sup>). So many of you are out to beat your last performance when the intense summer heat was a severely limiting factor. Most importantly, the money raised will be directly used to help veteran's and the community spirit is even better each time we hold these events. What's more, you know how much we go on about getting the less active around you moving- we have decided to make this one buy one get one free, so your partner/best friend/dog had better find another excuse not to join you on the day.

With all the negativity in the world it is an honor and privilege to be able to put information, resources, events and communities out there to spread a little light and positivity.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

I truly hope you enjoy this issue, and, as ever, please send any feedback to [insightpres@athletesinsight.com](mailto:insightpres@athletesinsight.com).

Enjoy!

*Rich Stead*



Issue 04 | 2017

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# ONE WILD RIDE: WITH ATHLETES INSIGHT FOUNDERS RICH + SARA

Words by DUSTIN CHAMBERS  
Photography by TOM SHAW

**W**hether you consider yourself an original advocate of their industry-disrupting performance sunglasses, have since joined in on one of their outstanding global races, or are a die-hard fan of their no-hierarchy Uplift Community of athletes (or maybe even just stare in awe at their Instagram feed), one thing is for sure- Athletes Insight has become an unlikely and illustrious name in the fitness arena. In an often claimed to be saturated space, what has made Athletes Insight such a success? And just who are the dynamic duo we are now beginning to see as the relatable faces of fitness? We sat down with the King and Queen of Athletes Insight, Rich Stead and Sara Aguayo, to learn more about these two driving forces behind their exciting company.

*It's great to finally meet you guys.*

**Sara:** Thanks for having us!

*Considering the size of Athletes Insight, and forgive me for saying this, as a long time follower until recently we haven't seen that much of either of you.*

**Rich:** Ha! Yes, I know. The lime-light doesn't come that naturally to me. When I was competing for Great Britain, my teammates would often refer to me as 'stealth'. I prefer my work and actions to do the talking, but I'm learning to be okay with being out there a bit more- it comes with the territory. Sara has always been the more charismatic of the two of us!

**Sara:** I think people can see that we are super relatable, just being ourselves and we have this great dynamic. People tend to gravitate towards one or the other depending on what type of person they are themselves.

**Rich:** Yea it's pretty funny, I think other couples maybe see themselves in us, so the mum's want Sara to train them up and then I get a lot of questions from guys about improving performance in their sport, or getting back to their fitness of when they were a bit younger.

*What have you set out to achieve with Athletes Insight, and what is it do you think that is making it stand out when there are so many other fitness 'celebrities' around?*



**SINCE IT'S INCEPTION, it's always been about one thing - helping people become their best selves.**

**Sara:** Going down the fitness celebrity route has never been an aim or intention of ours. Which is kind of another reason why we haven't always been in the lime-light since day one. It's always been about something much bigger than either of us, and we didn't want to limit Athletes

Insight to being just us two. With that said, we are extremely friendly and are a solid fountain of knowledge and resources to help people, and I think we realized we don't give ourselves enough credit sometimes.

**Rich:** We really do work on a lot of different things- providing support, fitness resources, events, a magazine, training, products, and as Sara said, it wouldn't do Athletes Insight justice if it was all about us. Since it's inception, it's always



## • TRAINING

been about one thing- helping people become their best selves. Think about it, everything we do comes under that umbrella.

**Sara:** Yea really since day one we've stuck by this saying "You vs You". In the age of social media, comparison to others has never been more prolific and damaging to people. We focus on internal competition and improving yourself to fulfil your potential and become the best of YOUR ability- without drawing parallels to anyone else.

**Rich:** I think that's one of the HUGE reasons why people like us. It doesn't matter if you are 70+ trying to improve your health, or a 14 year old just getting into a sport like running. We are here to support you and have an ever-expanding community of positive peers, idols and experts to help you along the way, through the good times and the bad. Combined with that, Sara and I bring a huge amount of experience through academics, performance coaching, elite sport science support, and being high level athletes ourselves, there's

a lot we've been fortunate enough to be involved with that gives us this great positioning to be able to apply the latest research and techniques to everyone from elite athletes to couch potatoes just starting on a fitness journey of their own.

***That makes a lot of sense. I think I saw on your site it said, "cut the fads".***

**Sara:** Exactly. From our community we've learnt that so many of them are tired of whatever the latest fitness fad is. The internet is full of terrible, terrible misinformation about what people should do to improve their health- some of it is dan-

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU AND HAVE AN  
EVER-EXPANDING COMMUNITY OF POSITIVE PEERS,  
IDOLS AND EXPERTS TO HELP YOU ALONG THE WAY,  
THROUGH THE GOOD TIMES AND THE BAD



MOST RECENTLY WE HAVE BEEN DOING GLOBAL RACES FOR CHARITY, WHERE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY TAKE PART AND TRY TO BETTER THEMSELVES



gerous, actually. That Maple Syrup Diet? Let's get real, no one is getting healthy by doing that. So we give the no fad, no B.S truth about health and fitness as a one-stop-shop and tell it like it is. You don't need magic bul-

lets, and you definitely don't need to work out all day. Just be smart, use the science and the facts of what we do know about the body to your advantage, and there's no reason you can't be the person you want to be.

**Rich:** There's definitely a misconception that getting fit is a cold-turkey switch and a huge effort. It's really not at all, in fact that's where so many people go wrong. They try switch up their whole lives, but there's usually reasons that their current life is the way it is. When we are training someone, we are always looking at ways we can integrate the improvement of health, fitness, and performance into their current lifestyle.

***How did the company get to where it is today?***

**Rich:** It's been a wild ride for sure. I've always been fascinated by improving human performance- by the time I was doing my Master's (degree) at Loughborough University I had been lucky enough to work with athletes from professional





teams like the Utah Jazz and working with elite athletes in the U.K too, and the kind of things we'd be doing just didn't translate out of these environments. The same level of detail just wasn't being applied to the rest of the population. But what if there were really talented people, that just didn't have access to the same resources? They would ultimately be at a disadvantage, and it was something I wanted to do something about. I met Sara in central California in the U.S, and as a distance runner in a comparatively very hot part of the

world she would be training in what seemed like crazy bright conditions in the blazing sun. It seemed almost like a coincidence that there was a skin research institute across the road from the track. And all I could think was, how do these guys do this everyday with the blistering glare and what damage is this doing to them?

**Sara:** A couple of my teammates had really expensive sunglasses (which they were often scared to wear for fear of breaking!) but most of us wore nothing on our faces- Rich and I figured

we could help a lot of people out if we could create sunglasses for runners that had all the features high performance sunglasses need, but without the ridiculous price tags. And so Athletes Insight was born, helping people improve performance since day 1! Long story short we went from prototype to prototype establishing what we and our early adopters felt was ideal (we ran the tagline 'running sunglasses perfected') and then took it to Kickstarter. That was a success and it has been a crazy rollercoaster since. We even sponsored the Spartan



**SUCCESS IS**  
definitely a habit,  
happening by doing  
things repeatedly  
and not just when  
you feel like it.

Race World Championships and the pro athletes wore them for the event and were in LOVE! It was (and still is) such a cool feeling to see our sunglasses worn by people all over the world. That was truly our launch platform and has allowed us to pursue so many avenues and areas that we believe matter.

**Rich:** A big one for me was the difference between elite level resources and the lack of them for upcoming athletes and individuals, except for the privileged few. Even between different elite sports, the support varies enormously. A lot of individual sports in particular, can seem lonely. And that's where

our Uplift Community comes in. People from all sports and abilities all in the same place, helping, encouraging, and learning from each other, celebrating the ups and downs of each other's fitness journeys along the way. For me, that is one of the most rewarding things we have managed to do so far.

**'Sara:** Sharing information from either of us our network of experts, or in our free magazine is a great way we are having an impact on people young and old. Everything we do is actionable, no fluff. Most recently we have been doing global races for charity, where people in our community take part and try to better themselves.'

**Rich:** It's great because people take part wherever they are, and it's such a great atmosphere because people get to know

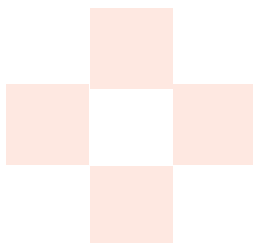
one another from across the world and share their videos of encouragement and progress with everyone. It's a great vibe.

**What advice do you have for anyone looking to get fitter?**

**Sara:** I would say for anyone, the fear of starting is way worse than actually starting something new! There are supportive people out there if you know where to look, and it's completely normal to feel motivated sometimes and not others.

**Rich:** Success is definitely a habit, happening by doing things repeatedly and not just when you feel like it. I think once you've accepted that and do it anyway, you'll find it won't be as bad as you thought, and your future self will thank you for it. And ask questions. Definitely ask questions.

# Quickfire Round



*What is your favorite thing to do on a Sunday morning?*

**Rich:** I LOVE the weekends. On a perfect Sunday morning, make a great breakfast and take stock of where life is at right now. I'm not sure there is much that is urgent on a Sunday morning that can't be done later in the day. But Saturday morning is actually my favorite time of the week and I like to get out for an adventure if possible!

**Sara:** I couldn't agree more with Rich. I personally love to wake up late and make something a little extra special for breakfast. Or grab the family and head out to a relaxing Sunday feast together! Sundays are usually "family" days for me, so any chance that I can combine family with food, I'm ALL about it.



*Who was the last person you had a good conversation with (other than each other!)*

**Rich:** My friend John [Baines], he's an old teammate of mine gearing up for his second Olympics and top guy.

**Sara:** My Dad. He never fails to call me once a week and when he does it is pretty much guaranteed that an hour or more is dedicated to catching each other up on the previous week. He is my best friend and a man I really admire and look up to. Our calls are something I greatly look forward to!



*What is your biggest pet peeve?*

**Rich:** Waiting on other people. My friends say I'm really easy going but I do expect common courtesy. That and 'instagram trainers'.

**Sara:** Oh wow. Rich is onto something there for sure. I would say for me, raised toilet seats.



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***Where do you want to travel next?***

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**Rich:** I would love to explore Vancouver, Canada.

**Sara:** Thailand. Immediately.



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***What is the last YT video you watched?***

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**Rich:** I think it was a travel video on Norway. There are some excellent videographers on YouTube. I really like the TravelFeels guy.

**Sara:** I religiously watch Drew Lynch. He has a vlog titled 'Dog Vlog' which gives an inside glimpse to his struggles with his speech impediment and the relationship he shares with his service dog. His self-deprecating humor and outlook on life just absolutely fascinates me.



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***What's something fun you did recently?***

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**Rich:** We did an escape room in Leeds called the Asylum, with my sister. I highly recommend it, it was the only thing we talked about for the rest of that day. And seeing Sara scared makes me laugh!

**Sara:** 100% in agreement with Rich! Not surprised my fear amuses him.



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***What do you do to relax?***

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**Rich:** I like a relaxing swim, or I sometimes play a game on my laptop if I need some escapism. Right now it's Just Cause 3.

**Sara:** No shame, I'll just sleep. Anywhere, anytime.



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***Favorite quote / sources of inspiration?***

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**Rich:** Our community, honestly. Just look at the people around you, and get a sense of what's possible in the world. Surround yourself with great people and open up your mind. There really are no limits.

**Sara:** My Dad used to always quote Paul J. Meyer to me, "Whatever you vividly imagine, sincerely believe in, enthusiastically act upon, will eventually come to pass". This has stuck with me from a very young age and can usually be found scribbled on anything I keep in sight.

### *What do you envision for the future of Athletes Insight?*

**Sara:** Oh my gosh we are so excited for the next few months. We actually have a new series coming out specially for the Dadbod's and Hotmom's! It's going to be a lot of fun, we have recently finished working devoting all our time to making it the best we possibly can. It's essentially an 8 week everything you need to know to take back your health and get in great shape if you have fallen off the wagon a bit!

**Rich:** Yea the people who have seen it so far are really into it! Making a difference in other people's lives really puts a smile on my face. We also have another great race coming up, AND some fantastic collaborations but our lips have to be sealed on that! On a personal level we are also moving house and want to get a big fluffy dog so that will be a lot of fun.

**Sara:** We put so much of our lives on Youtube, Facebook and Instagram stories these days you'll be able to see it all as it happens anyway!

*Follow Rich & Sara's shenanigan's @AthletesInsight on social channels, and check out the wealth of information and resources at*

*<https://www.AthletesInsight.com>.*



SHARING INFORMATION FROM EITHER OF US  
OUR NETWORK OF EXPERTS, OR IN OUR FREE  
MAGAZINE IS A GREAT WAY WE ARE HAVING  
AN IMPACT ON PEOPLE YOUNG AND OLD



# MASTERING MENTAL HEALTH IN **11** EASY STEPS

..... by RICH STEAD

Get in the right head-space by mastering mental health  
with the following simple tips:



# 1 Set Goals

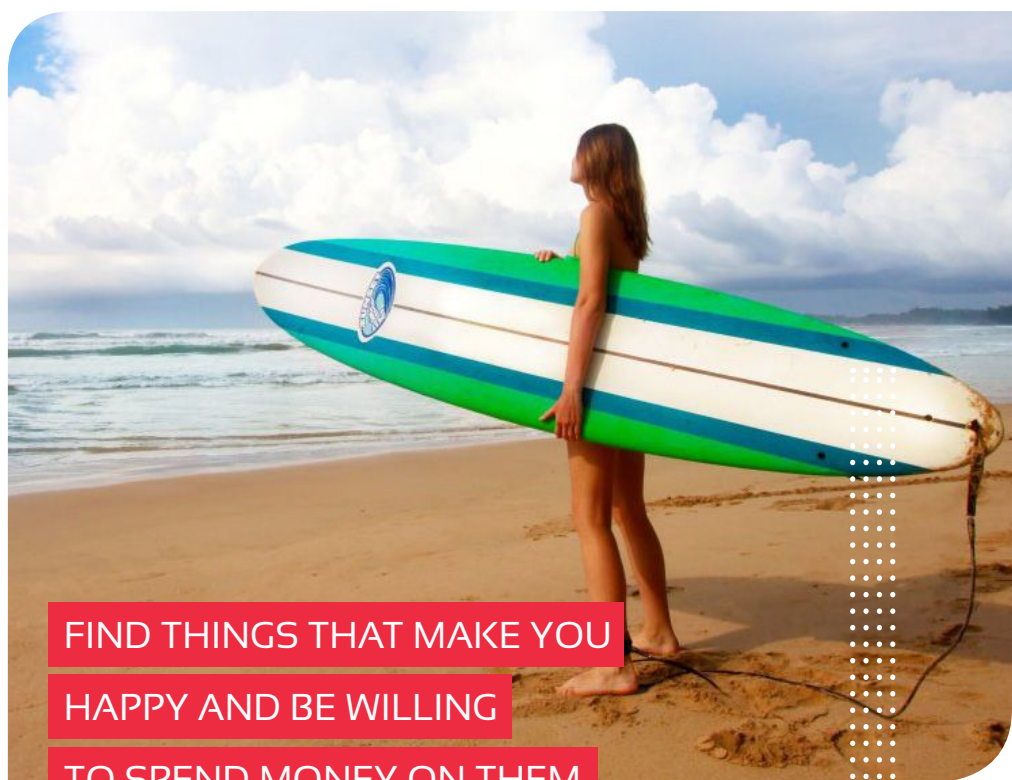
There are two types of goals you should set: 1) short-term, easily achievable goals; and 2) long-term goals that will require more discipline and dedication. Every time you reach a short-term goal, you'll get that feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment that will keep you working toward the long-term goal.

# 2 Invest in Yourself

You are worth investing your time, money, and effort in! Find things that make you happy and be willing to spend money on them. Invest time in learning, growing, and improving both personally and professionally. Be willing to be a bit selfish if it will enhance your quality of life.

# 3 Get Uncomfortable

Comfort is the enemy of progress. The moment you start feeling comfortable, that's when you stop changing. Growth is painful and uncomfortable, but it's vital for everyone. Stretch yourself; say yes to things you aren't 100% certain you can do. Throw yourself in the deep end and you may be surprised to find you can swim.



# 4 Never Stop Learning

Education serves two purposes: 1) it keeps your brain flexible and young, and 2) it makes you better at your profession and passion. Knowledge is so important—you can never learn too much. Every new piece of information or tidbit of knowledge you acquire will make you more well-rounded intellectually. You never know when that information will come in handy, or could be the solution you needed for a particularly tough problem. Don't just study for the sake of it—be laser-focused on educating yourself in things that you will use.



## 5 Sleep More

If you're not getting a solid 6 ½ to 8 hours of sleep at night, your brain and body will suffer. Not only will your attention and focus wane, but your body may misinterpret sleepiness signals as hunger pangs, leading to a higher risk of snacking and overeating. Plus, it can reduce muscle repair, energy replenishment, and overall organ function. A good night's sleep is the key to a happy, healthy body!

## 7 Reduce Toxin Exposure

We could talk all day about toxic chemicals and substances and their harm to your body, but in this case we're talking about toxic people and environments. Toxic people flood your life with negativity, and may hold you back from reaching your full potential. If you're in a toxic environment—a city you hate, a dead-end job, or a house that's falling apart—get out! If you're unhappy where you are and need to move, move! Your short stay on this

planet should be a positive experience free of toxic people and in pleasant environments.

## 8 Be Happy With What You Have

Stop chasing things you think you want or need, but learn to be happy with what you already have. The pursuit of material wealth and treasures is exhausting, endless, and absolutely pointless. By being happy with what you have, you'll be more at peace. The shift in your perspective will change the energy you project into the world and those around you.



**EXERCISE INCREASES**  
overall fitness,  
and motivates  
you mentally and  
emotionally

## 6 Exercise

I cannot stress highly enough the importance of a good daily workout. Exercise keeps your muscles, joints, and bones moving fluidly, prevents stiffness and inflexibility, encourages better posture, boosts your metabolism, combats fat storage, increases overall fitness, and motivates you mentally and emotionally. Best of all, there is a cathartic feeling to exercise—it feels amazing to push, pull, and lift your worries and stressors away.



IT'S TIME TO START  
FOCUSING ON THE  
GOOD AND ACCEPTING  
THE BAD AS ANOTHER  
ASPECT OF THE GOOD

## 9 Accept Yourself

We are our harshest critics! It's so easy to get mired down with self-judgment and self-recrimination. Time to stop. Easier said than done, I know, but it's important to start the process of changing our inner monologue (self-talk) to a more positive one. Find the things about yourself that you can love. For example, I am blessed with the ability to change people's lives and love helping and serving others. This is something I am happy about, and it helps me to accept the things about me that may not be as good, such as my need for my own time as a natural introvert. There will always be good and bad—it's time to start focusing on the good and accepting the bad as another aspect of the good.

## 10 Get Used to Failure

Not only is failure a normal part of life, it's a very IMPORTANT part. Failure teaches us what we need to learn, and helps us to find the aspects of our personalities and skillsets that require strengthening. Like muscles grow stronger from the catabolism caused by heavy weightlifting, so too we become stronger by learning from our failures. Your first ANYTHING will suck—accept it. Anything you do for the first time is more likely to fail than succeed. But with time, persistence, and patience (three characteristics very uncommon in our current western culture of instant gratification), you will get better. To master anything, you must stick at it.

## 11 Go Forth and Conquer Without Regret

Start something new. Make a change in your life. Move countries. Commit to something “just because”. Travel! You cannot overestimate the importance of seeing things outside of your “bubble”, and money on travel is never wasted. The “worst that could happen” rarely (if ever) does, and the potential rewards are much, much greater than you can perceive. Open your mind. Don't sweat the small stuff. Life is happening, whether you like it or not—you may as well like it—so go out there and live it.



**Mastering mental health can often seem like simple advice, but can be tough to follow! The journey of self-improvement never ends. All we can do is try our best every day.**



# MAINTAINING MUSCLE MASS IN A CALORIE DEFICIT

..... by RICH STEAD

We've all heard that weight loss is a simple formula. **That formula is:**

$$\text{CALORIES CONSUMED} < \text{CALORIES BURNED} = \text{WEIGHT LOSS}$$

Pretty straightforward, right? All you have to do is make sure you are burning more calories per day than you eat (also known as a calorie deficit), and you're on the path to weight loss.



**DAILY RESISTANCE TRAINING** will prevent muscle mass breakdown even in a caloric deficit

**T**he problem is that your body has only two ways to combat a calorie deficit:

- It taps into stored fat as an energy source, activating inert fatty acids to burn for fuel. (And this is what you REALLY want).
- It taps into muscle mass and the energy stored therein for fuel.

Guess which one is more likely to happen. You got it: your body will ALWAYS break down muscle before it breaks down fat.

You see, your body's fat-storing mechanism is similar to the way squirrels store nuts for winter. Your body is preparing for the inevitable "starvation periods" (calorie deficits) by storing fat, which it will access if you ever find yourself desperate for food. The problem is that

in our modern society with its unlimited access to food, your body will never be that desperate.

Stored fat is your "last-ditch resource", the one your body only taps into when it has no other choice. Muscular energy, on the other hand, is a much more dynamic, changing energy source. Your muscles burn that energy every time they contract, and it has to be replaced in order for your muscles to keep working.

But in a caloric deficit, your body has to choose where to pull energy from. Obviously it's going to take the long-term view, and thus it keeps the fat stores and taps into muscle mass. Over the course of weeks or months of a caloric deficit, you can lose a lot of muscle mass.

UNLESS, of course, you do the following:

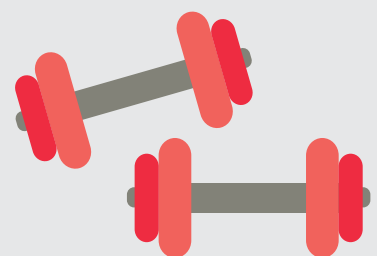


**EXERCISE** – Your

body distributes energy according to the organs and internal functions that are most important (brain, heart, liver, digestive system, etc.). But if your muscles are always working, it has to use available energy to replenish the energy burned up during muscle contractions. Thus, keeping your muscles active in a calorie deficit will reduce the risk of muscle mass breakdown.

What does this mean?

**Simple: lift weights!**



## • TRAINING

Weightlifting and resistance training keep your body focused on repairing the muscle tissue damaged by the heavy lifting (a good thing!). After all, if you're using your muscles every day, you signal to your body that it needs to keep sending energy to those muscles. The body can't break down and build at the same time. Daily resistance training will prevent muscle mass breakdown even in a caloric deficit.

Exercise also activates stored fatty acids, providing your body an alternative energy source (the RIGHT one). By exercising, you protect your muscle mass and encourage the activation/burning of fat cells.

### **EAT MORE PROTEIN** –

Remember how the body “can't break down and build at the same time”? If you give your body the amino acids needed to build muscle, it will be in an anabolic (growth) state. When it comes time to break down tissues for energy, your body will be forced to look elsewhere. With less than sufficient energy in your bloodstream and liver, there is



**A HIGH-PROTEIN DIET CAN HELP TO PREVENT MUSCLE MASS BREAKDOWN, AND YOU CAN STILL CUT CALORIES TO ENCOURAGE FAT-BURNING**

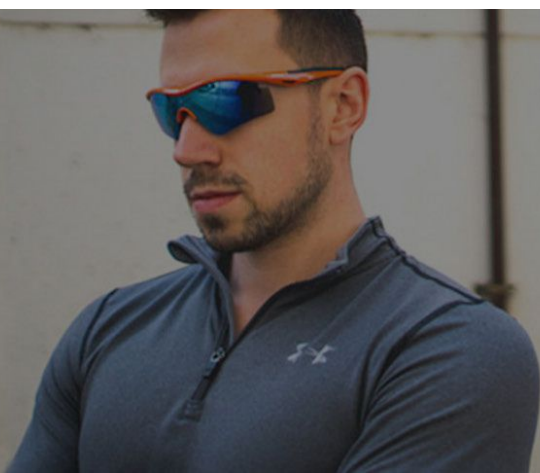
no choice but to activate stored fatty acids.

A high-protein diet can help to prevent muscle mass breakdown, and you can still cut calories to encourage fat-burning.

**EAT MORE FAT** – This may sound counterintuitive. After all, eating MORE fat should make it harder for your body to burn fat, right?

Well, let me explain: the average American has a very high-carb diet. Over time, we've trained our bodies to burn primarily carbs for energy instead of fat. The body adapts to its environment, the exercise we do, and the food we feed it. If you feed it high-fat foods, it will adapt to burn fat more easily.

But this better fat-burning isn't restricted to only the fat you consume in your daily diet. As



## Running Sunglasses Perfected

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for short-term exercise and activity. Once it runs out, it will turn to the fat you've eaten and absorbed, then the stored fat it has activated.

***The key to weight loss success—which really means FAT loss—is to cut back on the amount of carbohydrates you eat and increase the amount of fats you eat. By reducing your carb intake, you put your body into a fat-burning state. But keeping SOME carbs (the right ones) in your diet ensures that you have the energy required for high-intensity activity.***

you increase your body's fat metabolism, you'll make it more efficient at burning the fat cells it activates for energy. It will be able to turn that stored fat into a form of energy your body can use more easily. Over time, thanks to your high-protein calorie deficit diet, you'll burn through the fat stores.

This, of course, only works if you're depriving your body of its primary energy source: carbohydrates. This is where the next point comes into play...

**EAT THE RIGHT CARBS** – The "right" carbs mean any carbohydrates that are loaded with dietary fiber: fruits, whole grains, seeds, nuts, legumes. The dietary fiber slows down the absorption

rate of the carbs, providing a slow, steady burn of energy. These carbs will give your body the energy needed

**IN FACT, THANKS TO THE EXERCISE and high protein intake, you'll actually maintain or even INCREASE muscle mass while DECREASING fat mass—a total win-win!**

And that's it! A calorie deficit can be the most effective long-term solution to weight loss. By following the four guidelines listed above, you will be able to promote better fat burning without losing muscle mass. In fact, thanks to the exercise and high protein intake, you'll actually maintain or even INCREASE muscle mass while DECREASING fat mass—a total win-win!



# FINDING THE RIGHT TRAINER FOR YOU

## DO YOU EVEN NEED ONE?

by RICH STEAD

Free workout programs can be a great help when starting your fitness journey, making it easier for you to get working on your conditioning, fat loss, and muscular growth.





**B**ut what happens when you get past the “beginner” stage? Perhaps you’ve been training for a few months at your gym or even following the latest fad online or in a magazine. You start to see early results in muscular strength, cardiovascular endurance, and mobility as you wake and begin to activate your previously dormant muscles. It’s at this point that most people then tend to [stagnate](#).

## Do You Need a Trainer

The human body is designed to adapt to both supply (of food) and demand (energy demands). The more you push yourself, the more your body adapts. But with a very basic workout or even a rudimentary gym training session, are you really pushing your body at 100%? The answer: probably not... especially in an age of [instagram](#) workouts-



**WORKING WITH A FITNESS TRAINER** will help you to keep kicking things up a notch and continually progress at the appropriate rate for you

remember, anyone can throw some exercises together and make a workout, but very few coaches can truly shape lives.

Human nature being what it is, you’re likely to stop pushing yourself hard, mixing up the workouts, and putting your body through its paces. You’ll probably work out with less frequency and opt for easier, less demanding workouts.

Working with a fitness trainer, on the other hand, will help you to keep kicking things up a notch and continually progress at the appropriate rate for you. Think about this- it’s not just what you GET from the trainer, but the information you GIVE by working with them, that allows appropriate workouts to be created that maximize your results.



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Once the trainer sees that you've adapted to one workout, they'll mix it up and find a new way to challenge you. They'll add weights, sets, challenges and reps to your training sessions, forcing your body beyond what it's currently capable of. In the end, THAT is what gets the results you want.

If you're serious about getting in shape, you need a fitness trainer. Alone, you can only go so far. You're eventually going to "ease up", which can lead to stagnation and boredom with your training. By having someone who will push you hard, you will be able to go the distance and see results. This is true even of expert trainers-



always work with someone else for your own program- it will challenge your way of thinking and push you out of your comfort zone.

### What Makes a Good Fitness Trainer?

Let's be clear: a fitness trainer isn't necessarily someone that trains you at the gym. They can

work with you at home, over the internet, or via a regular workout program. Whether they're there in person or helping you remotely, they're the best option to help you get results.

But what should you look for in a trainer? In many cases, availability is the most common recommendation. With only a few trainers at



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- ❖ FREE ACCESS
- ❖ PRO TIPS
- ❖ GIVEAWAYS



**YOUR GOAL**  
 should be to find  
 a trainer who has  
 experience and  
 knowledge, who  
 stimulates you to keep  
 working hard

your local gym or CrossFit box to choose from, you may feel like you don't have options.

Not so!

Don't settle for "whoever is available". Your goal should be to find a trainer who has experience and knowledge, who stimulates you to keep working hard, who offers inspiration and encouragement, genuinely cares about your progress, and who is motivating you to work out.

But here's the most important thing: they should teach "sustainability"—the ability to keep working out on your own even when they're not around. A sustainable workout program is one that you look forward to, and which keeps you working, moving, and training no matter where you are. That's the only

way that you're going to see results. The right trainer will help to create this program for you. Once it's in place, they'll prepare you to keep going on it no matter what happens. A good trainer should educate you.

### Why Athletes Insight Could Be Right For You

Athletes Insight is the solution for those who want to take their long-term fitness seriously. Based entirely around the support of individuals, the organization guides complete beginners, weekend warriors,

and Olympic athletes through personalized and small group coaching to help you not only start your fitness journey, but see it through all the way to your definition of success.

Athletes Insight is the creation of Rich Stead, an applied sport scientist, with experience training athletes from the NBA, to international ice-skating, and everyone in between. He is also an ex-international athlete himself, competing around the world for Great Britain in the Winter Olympic sport of bobsled in both the two- and four-man events, collecting an array of medals along the way after transferring from the British Skeleton talent program. With the help of Sara Aguayo, the in-house running expert specializing in health and wellness, this dynamic duo

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are setting the record straight for individuals overwhelmed by fitness fads and misinformation plaguing the internet.

Not only does Rich have the experience, he has the knowledge as well. With Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Kinesiology from the prestigious Loughborough University in the U.K., Rich is a CSCS Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, Sports Nutritionist, and of course, certified trainer.

### Supporting Your Journey

Athletes Insight has created an [uplifting community](#) to provide support for athletes of all abilities. Whether you're a beginner or an advanced athlete, there is a place for you. They are strong believers in celebrating the roller-coaster ride of an athlete's journey.

Personalized online coaching is available for athletes and trainees of every ability and fitness level. Whether you're a newbie to the gym or you've been training for years, you can find a program to exceed your standards. Best of all, you'll be able to work out from home or your local gym with the help of Rich, Sara and their trainers to walk you through the sessions.

With bespoke online personal training programs to motivate

**SARA AGUAYO**  
Head Health & Wellness Coach



**RICH STEAD**  
Head Performance Coach

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO WORK OUT FROM HOME OR YOUR LOCAL GYM WITH THE HELP OF RICH, SARA AND THEIR TRAINERS TO WALK YOU THROUGH THE SESSIONS

you to do more and push yourself harder than ever, every session is tailored to your goals and fitness level- and ample motivation and inspiration will help you to keep working. Athletes Insight also keeps you accountable, tracks your progress, and follows up to ensure you're doing your part. You'll find fitness education to teach you everything you need to know to reach your goals.

Athletes Insight isn't just a short-term solution; it offers

personal, sustainable fitness programs that will prepare you for a life of fitness and activity. From diet plans to exercise programs to training protocols, the vast resources and expert guidance will help you find your most effective path to fitness success.

[Start Your Journey with Athletes Insight today- explore the options and your consultation is absolutely FREE.](#)



# 10

# BEST ABS EXERCISES YOU CAN DO AT HOME

by SARA AGUAYO

If you want to get in good shape, you need to give your core some love with these top abs exercises you can do at home! Your core muscles (abs, back, and obliques) are the most important muscles in your body to exercise. They're what keep you standing upright, play a huge role in your posture, and protect your spine as you lift, sit, stand, and move.

**Y**our abs, in particular, need special attention. Your lower back gets a lot of attention

when you deadlift, but your abs require direct engagement in order to see results. Try a few of these exercises at the end of your workout. Not only can you finish the workout with a hardcore abs session, but you can capitalize on fat-burning to encourage better belly fat loss.

Check out the circuits below to find the best abs workout you can do at home. We've got plenty of options to help you mix things up and keep your abs muscles guessing every day!



**YOUR GOAL IS TO WORK UP TO 3-5 CIRCUITS AT THE END OF EACH TRAINING SESSION.**



## ❖ The Best Abs Workout You Can Do At Home

The workout below is divided into three circuits, each containing four different exercises. Do a set of each exercise, hitting as many repetitions as you can. If you feel up to it, do a second circuit, repeating each movement. Your goal is to work up to 3-5 circuits at the end of each training session. Do this, and you will see some serious progress in your muscles!

### **CIRCUIT 1:**

- Plank
- V-Ups
- Hanging Leg Raises
- Plank Jack

### **CIRCUIT 2:**

- Crunches
- Plank
- Mountain Climber
- Boat Pose

### **CIRCUIT 3:**

- Ab Scissors
- Leg Raises
- Reverse Crunches
- Plank

## The Exercises Explained

Below is an explanation of each exercise (in case you are not familiar with them):

# 1 Plank

Plank is one of the most effective abs exercises, not to mention one of the easiest on your joints. There is ZERO impact or range of motion, so there's almost no risk of injury. Simply, hold the Plank position for 30 to 60 seconds, and the perpetual contraction will do all the work of engaging your muscles.

Plank can be done by beginners and advanced trainees alike. The only thing that changes is the duration of the plank! The longer you hold, the harder it gets.



# 2 V-Ups



V-Ups are a more advanced movement that utilizes both the upper and lower body to engage the core muscles. Most of the weight comes from your legs, but the fact that you have to lift your torso means your upper ab muscles work as well. It is one of the most well-rounded of the abs movements, and definitely not an easy one to master.

## 3 Hanging Leg Raises

Hanging Leg Raises – This body weight exercise can be done anywhere. All you need is a pull-up bar to hang from and you're good to go. The hanging actually encourages better grip strength while working your core. The weight of your legs makes this movement beautifully challenging without increasing the strain on your spine or hips.



## 4 Plank Jacks



Plank Jacks – If you want to kick the Plank difficulty up a notch, Plank Jacks are a brilliant movement. They involve a bit of jumping (meaning better cardiovascular engagement) but don't take the focus off your core. If anything, the addition of the jump increases the involvement of your core. It is not for the faint of heart, but it can yield some pretty impressive results.



## 5 Crunches

Crunches are the classic abs workout, one that EVERYONE has done at some point in their lives. However, it's not the most effective exercise, and it's one that can easily be performed incorrectly. The abs muscles adapt to this particular movement pretty easily. It's a good one to include in your workout (especially to kick off the training) but shouldn't be the only abs movement you do.



## 6 Mountain Climbers



Mountain Climbers are a great option to strengthen not only your core, but also the muscles in your hips that pull your legs upward. This movement will also work your upper body (holding the Plank position is tiring) and hips, leading to an amazing workout if done right.

## 7 Boat Pose

This Yoga movement is quite difficult to do but amazing for engaging your upper and lower ab muscles. The fact that you're holding your legs static (fixed) means your muscles are perpetually engaged throughout the movement. There's no "rest", so you'll run out of steam in 20 to 40 seconds—all the while giving your core a killer workout!



## 8 Ab Scissors



This is another old-school exercise that yields favorable results! The lateral (side to side) movement reduces the strain on the connective tissue that connects your hips to your thighs, instead focusing on the lower abs muscles that hold your legs off the ground. It's amazing for improving hip mobility as well.

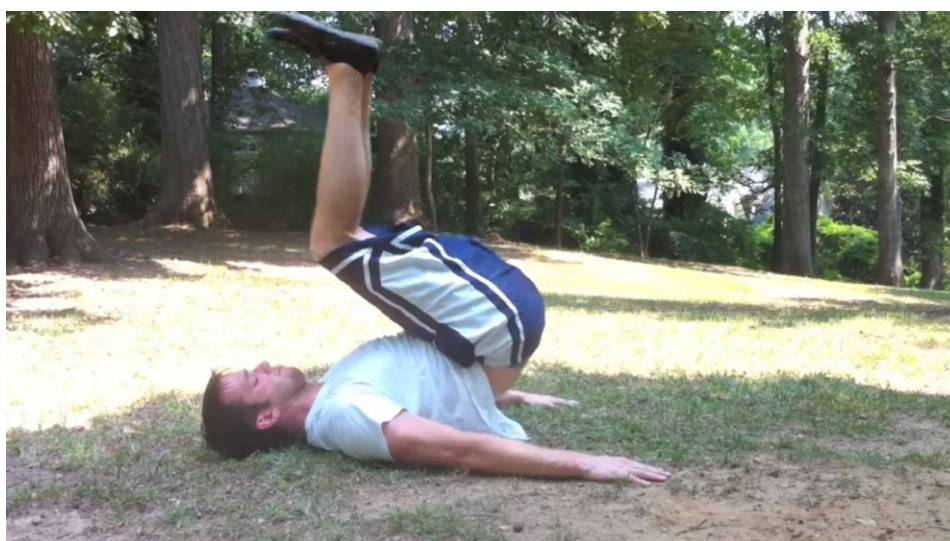
## 9 Leg Raises

With this exercise, your abs have to lift ALL the weight of your legs, definitely not an easy thing to do. This is one of the best movements to shred your abs, and this body weight exercise requires no additional weight. However, once you master the body weight leg raise, you can easily make the movement more challenging by wearing leg weights or gripping a weight (heavy can, dumbbell, medicine ball, etc.) between your feet—adding another layer of difficulty to the movement.



## 10 Reverse Crunches

With this movement, you work both your upper and lower abs without engaging your spine or straining your neck. You'll find it's much harder to perform Reverse Crunches than the standard form Crunches, which means better results in the long run.



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