

# 3 Best Incline Bench Exercises for Abs

**Meta Description:** Discover how to build stronger abs with incline leg raises, incline Russian twists, and weighted incline crunches for a superior core.



**Alt text:** The SOLE SW116 Weight Bench.

## Key Takeaways

- Incline leg raises target the lower abdominals by creating a biomechanical advantage, as the decline position increases resistance against gravity.
- Incline Russian twists eliminate rest periods during floor-based twists by maintaining constant tension throughout the entire range of motion.
- Weighted incline crunches keep upper abs under continuous tension throughout the entire range of motion, unlike regular crunches that lose tension at the top.
- The optimal incline angle for most ab exercises is between 30 and 45 degrees and is adjustable based on fitness level.
- Build comprehensive core strength at home with the [SOLE SW116 Weight Bench](#) with 9 adjustable positions for precise incline angles and the [SOLE SW180 Adjustable Dumbbells](#) for weighted progressions.

# How Incline Bench Training Transforms Ab Development

The magic behind incline training lies in its ability to create progressive resistance throughout the entire range of motion. By adjusting the bench angle, you can shift the emphasis from upper to lower abs or focus on obliques with greater precision.

When performing exercises on an incline with your head positioned higher than your feet, your lower body becomes heavier relative to your upper body. Your abs must work significantly harder, creating natural progressive overload without external weights.

The incline position allows a greater range of motion than flat surfaces, forcing the abs to contract more fully while lengthening the eccentric phase.

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## Exercise 1: Incline Leg Raises



**Caption:** Incline leg raises stand as the gold standard for targeting lower abdominals because the decline position, with the head lower than the feet, increases resistance against your lower abs.

**Alt text:** Woman performing incline leg raises on an adjustable bench.

Incline [leg raises](#) create a biomechanical advantage that flat-surface variations cannot match. The key to maximizing this movement lies in proper pelvic positioning: maintain a slight posterior pelvic tilt and tuck the tailbone slightly to ensure the hip flexors do not take over the movement.

### How to Perform

1. Set the bench at a moderate 30-degree incline, and lie back with your head at the highest point.
2. Firmly grasp the top of the bench behind your head for stability.
3. Press your lower back into the bench by engaging the core and slightly tucking the pelvis.

4. Keep your legs straight but not locked.
5. Raise legs until they form a 90-degree angle with the torso.
6. Control the descent by counting to four as you lower your legs.
7. Stop just before the legs touch the bench, then repeat.

## Programming

Perform 3 sets of 10–15 reps with 60 seconds of rest between sets.

## Variations by Level

Beginners should start with bent-knee raises, keeping their knees at 90 degrees throughout the movement to reduce the difficulty and allow proper form development.

Intermediate trainees can progress to straight-leg raises with full leg extension, which significantly increases the challenge.

Advanced athletes can add 2–5 pounds of ankle weights for increased resistance once they have mastered the bodyweight version with perfect form.

## Exercise 2: Incline Russian Twists

Beyond aesthetic benefits, strong [obliques](#) are crucial for rotational power in sports and daily activities. The incline variation targets not only the superficial oblique muscles but also engages the deeper transverse abdominis, providing comprehensive core strength.

## How to Perform

1. Set the bench at a 30–45 degree incline.
2. Position your lower back firmly against the pad.
3. Elevate the feet slightly off the ground to create a hollow-body position (this pre-activates the core).
4. Hold the weight at chest level, or extend the arms for increased difficulty.
5. Rotate through the waist, not the shoulders, keeping the lower back pressed against the bench.
6. Control rotation to each side, pausing briefly at the end range.
7. Return to the center and repeat to the opposite side.

## Programming

Perform 2–3 sets of 12–15 reps per side with 45–60 seconds of rest between sets.

## Weight Progression

Start with bodyweight only, focusing entirely on developing perfect form before adding external resistance. Once you can complete the prescribed reps with proper technique,

introduce a light weight of 5–10 pounds held at chest level. Increase the weight by no more than 5 pounds every two weeks to ensure continued progress without compromising form.

## Exercise 3: Weighted Incline Crunches



**Caption:** Weighted incline crunches represent the perfect synthesis of traditional strength training principles with optimized biomechanics for abdominal development.

**Alt text:** Image of SOLE SW116 Weight Bench.

What sets weighted incline [crunches](#) apart is their scalability. By progressively adding weight and adjusting incline angle, you can continue making strength gains long after bodyweight exercises would have plateaued.

### How to Perform

1. Position your shoulders and upper back against the incline bench.
2. Hold a weight plate or a dumbbell against your chest.
3. Crunch upward, creating a C curve with spine (not just bending at hips).
4. Use controlled 2-1-3 tempo: 2 seconds up, 1 second squeeze at top, 3 seconds lowering.
5. At the top, hold for 1 second in isometric contraction, squeezing the abs hard.
6. Lower under complete control to the starting position.

### Programming

Perform 3 sets of 8–12 reps with 60–90 seconds of rest between sets.

## Finding Your Optimal Incline Angle

Those with longer torsos typically benefit from steeper inclines of 30–45 degrees, while individuals with shorter torsos often find that moderate inclines of 15–30 degrees provide the perfect challenge.

The key indicator of proper angle selection is your ability to maintain correct form throughout the entire set—if your technique breaks down before reaching your target reps, reduce the incline slightly.

## Best Incline Bench Exercises for Abs: Summary Table

| Exercise                         | Primary Target                      | Sets × Reps          | Rest Period   | Progression                                                      | Key Benefit                                                                             |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Incline Leg Raises</b>        | Lower Abdominals                    | 3 × 10–15            | 60 seconds    | Bent-knee → Straight-leg → Ankle weights (2–5 lbs)               | Creates biomechanical advantage; decline position increases resistance against gravity  |
| <b>Incline Russian Twists</b>    | Obliques & Transverse Abdominis     | 2–3 × 12–15 per side | 45–60 seconds | Bodyweight → 5–10 lbs → Progressive 5 lb increases every 2 weeks | Eliminates rest periods; maintains constant tension throughout the full range of motion |
| <b>Weighted Incline Crunches</b> | Upper Abdominals (Rectus Abdominis) | 3 × 8–12             | 60–90 seconds | Bodyweight → Light weight plate/dumbbell → Progressive increases | Continuous tension with 2-1-3 tempo; highly scalable for long-term strength gains       |

## Build Stronger Abs with Incline Training Using SOLE Equipment



**Caption:** The incline bench is your secret weapon for core development because the sloped surface creates a mechanical advantage that flat-surface exercises cannot match.

**Alt text:** The SOLE SW116 Weight Bench.

Building strong, defined abs at home requires an adjustable bench that enables precise incline angles for progressive overload across all three exercises.

The [SOLE SW116 Weight Bench](#) with 9 adjustable positions lets you start at modest angles as a beginner and progressively increase the incline as your core strength builds over weeks and months of consistent training.

The [SOLE SW180 Adjustable Dumbbells](#) with 16 weight settings ranging from 5–80 pounds enable weighted progressions for incline crunches and [Russian twists](#) without cluttering your workout space with multiple sets of fixed dumbbells.

The [SOLE Equipment Mat](#) provides a stable, non-slip surface for positioning your bench and protecting your flooring from heavy equipment.

For overall fitness that supports visible ab development, the [SOLE Treadmill](#) provides the cardiovascular training needed to reduce body fat and reveal your developed abdominal muscles.

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## **Can beginners safely perform incline bench ab exercises?**

Absolutely, but proper progression is essential for both safety and results. Beginners should start with a modest incline angle of 10–20 degrees and focus on mastering proper form before increasing the challenge.

Pay particular attention to maintaining a proper posterior pelvic tilt by keeping your lower back pressed against the bench throughout each movement. Once you can complete all prescribed reps with perfect form, gradually increase the incline by 5 degrees and repeat the process.

## **What incline angle is best for targeting lower abs?**

For maximum lower abdominal recruitment, a 30–45-degree incline is typically most effective. At this angle, gravity creates significant resistance against your lower body during leg raise variations, forcing your lower abs to work much harder than they would on a flat surface.

However, the ideal angle varies based on your current strength level and torso length, so start with a conservative angle and increase gradually as your strength improves.

## **Will these exercises help me lose belly fat?**

While incline ab exercises are excellent for developing core strength and building abdominal muscle, spot reduction of fat is not physiologically possible.

These exercises build the abdominal muscles, which become visible as your overall body fat percentage decreases through proper nutrition and a comprehensive exercise program that includes both resistance training and cardiovascular activity.

## **How do I incorporate incline bench exercises into my existing routine?**

Dedicate 10–15 minutes at the end of your regular workouts to focused ab training, or create separate, specialized core sessions on rest days. Perform these exercises after your main compound movements when your core is warm but before complete fatigue sets in.

Avoid intense ab work the day before heavy squats or deadlifts, as fatigued abdominals can compromise your stability and performance on these demanding exercises.

## **What equipment supports comprehensive incline bench ab training at home?**

For home incline bench ab training, the [SOLE SW116 Weight Bench](#) with 9 positions enables precise angle adjustments, while the SW180 Adjustable Dumbbells allow weighted progressions.

**\*Disclaimer:** *Products and prices mentioned in this article are accurate as of the date of publication and are subject to change. Please visit the [official SOLE website](#) for the most current information.*