

SELF

SOPHIE TURNER

FROM GAME OF
THRONES TO X-MEN

#SORENOTSORRY

THE MOST
FUN
WORKOUT

**RUN
THE
WORLD**

SOFT,
SEXY
HAIR &
SKIN



SHAZAM
THE COVER
FOR MORE
SOPHIE
P. 4

211 WAYS TO REACH
ANY GOAL,
BODY & BEYOND

+ BEST SPORTS BRAS! P. 45

(SELF)

MOTIVATE

ABS LAB

➔ *There's a science to scoring strong, sexy abs. Here's what you need to know to crack the code.* BY CINDY KUZMA

Some women seem to rock major ab definition after just a few weeks of clean eating and amped-up workouts. For others, it feels like it would take months of perfectly portioned meals, marathon workouts and a nonexistent social life to get to #AbsGoals territory. The truth is that our genetics—which influences everything from metabolism to hormone levels to the way we store fat—plays the biggest role in our six-pack potential.

BLUE TOP Fit Mama **YELLOW SPORTS BRA**
Akrovita **LEGGINGS X** by Gottex

Photographed by **SAM KWESKIN**
Styled by **TAYLOR OKATA**

HAIR, DANA BOYER FOR BUMBLE AND BUMBLE; MAKEUP, SUZY GERSTEIN FOR LANCOME; MANICURE, YUKIE MIYAKAWA FOR DIOR VERNIS; MODEL, HANNAH DAVIS. SEE GET-IT GUIDE.

You could see some abs action when your body fat is at a fit but attainable 20 percent. Or your midsection muscles could remain hidden at a super low 10 to 15 percent, says John Porcari, Ph.D., professor of exercise and sports science at the University of Wisconsin in La Crosse. It all depends where you store fat.

Regardless of the raw materials heredity hands you, there are variables you can control to maximize your core strength. One key: a resistance training program that works *all* of your muscles, not just your midsection. “You can’t spot-reduce, but you can shape your rectus abdominis and obliques with targeted training the same way you can increase definition in your biceps or glutes,” says trainer Hannah Davis of Body By Hannah in Cleveland, Tennessee. She designed the abs routine on the next page to hit your core from both the front and side, as well as the supporting muscles of your back.

As a bonus, resistance exercises will improve your posture and boost your performance in every athletic move. Find the other key components to a solid core below, including an abs-friendly diet, calorie-sizzling cardio and (who knew?) adequate sleep.

CORE VALUES

These are the key variables in the great abs equation, plus tips on how to make them add up in your favor.

GENETICS // Your DNA determines where you store body fat—and plays a role in how quickly you can reduce it. “How much testosterone you have also makes a difference,” says exercise physiologist John Porcari, Ph.D. “The higher your levels, the more easily you build muscle everywhere, including your core.”

DIET // When it comes to factors you can control, what you eat really matters, says Michele Olson, Ph.D., professor of exercise physiology at Auburn University in Montgomery, Alabama. Think high fiber, lots of protein and healthy fats. (Try the ideas at right.)

STRENGTH // The more muscle you have, the more calories you zap all day. The best way to build lean tissue is with a full-body strength program at least two

days a week, trainer Hannah Davis says. Add core moves (opposite) to that foundation.

CARDIO // Steady-state activities keep weight in check—but high-intensity intervals are crucial. When two of four weekly cardio workouts were HIIT routines, exercisers decreased both total and visceral fat—the kind deep inside the gut—faster, per a study in *The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*. (PSA: All cardio sessions also included strength training!)

SLEEP // Adequate rest doesn’t just give you the energy you need to crush workouts, it also reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which has been linked to belly-fat accumulation. A study in the journal *Nature Communications* found that skimping on zzz’s may also cause us to pick foods that trigger weight gain.

ABS ARE MADE IN THE KITCHEN...

Eat clean and debloat with these R.D.-recommended eats that will keep you full (and your taste buds happy).

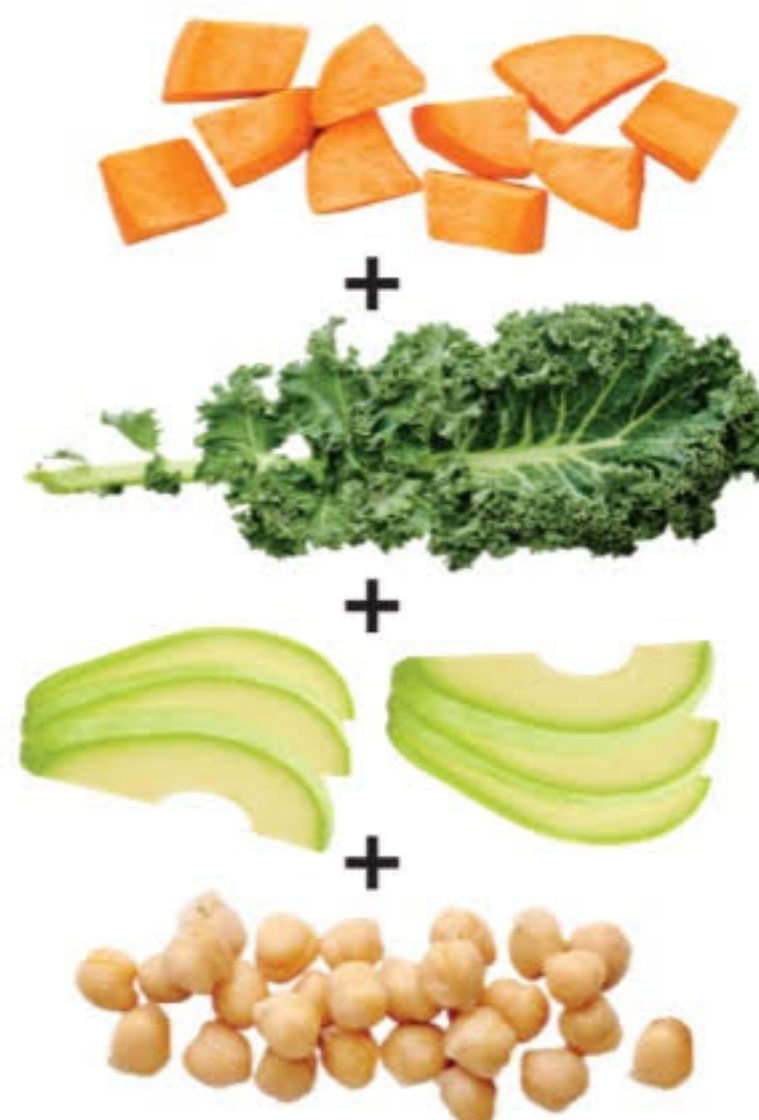
BREAKFAST



AB-TASTIC OATMEAL

Cook ½ cup rolled oats in 1 cup lowfat milk (or unsweetened dairy alternative, such as almond milk). Stir in 1 cup mixed berries. Sprinkle with 1 tbsp nuts or seeds (2 tbsp if using a dairy alternative). Drizzle with 1 tsp maple syrup.

LUNCH



SUPER VEG BOWL

Roast 1 cup sweet potato chunks. Sauté 1½ cups kale and 1 tsp chopped garlic in 1 tsp olive oil. Toss together with ¼ avocado, sliced, ⅔ cup chickpeas and vinaigrette made with 1 tsp olive oil, 1 tsp balsamic vinegar, and salt and pepper.

DINNER



POWER SALMON

Broil 4 oz salmon with lemon and dill. Serve with ¾ cup cooked quinoa drizzled with 1 tsp olive oil and 7 asparagus spears roasted (or grilled) with 1 tsp olive oil.

SOURCE: WILLOW JAROSH, R.D., AND STEPHANIE CLARKE, R.D.

TRAINER TO GO

THE ABS WORKOUT

Sculpting your abs requires firing up every inch of your midsection, from the top of your rectus abdominis, or six-pack muscles, to your obliques. This routine challenges them all in seven moves. Don't rush: Slow, controlled movements ensure your core muscles do the work, not gravity or momentum.

YOUR TRAINER Hannah Davis (pictured), a trainer in Cleveland, Tennessee, and founder of Body By Hannah

YOU'LL NEED gliding disks (or small towels or paper plates).

DO three sets of each move up to five times per week. You can do the routine before or after cardio, but if you're strength training, do these moves last.

1 BICYCLE

Works abs, obliques, hip flexors

Sit on floor with knees bent, feet lifted, hands behind head. Keep chest up and back straight as you lean back to engage abs. Twist to bring right elbow to left knee, straightening right leg (as shown). Repeat on opposite side for 1 rep. Do 10 to 15 reps.



2 SLIDER PIKE

Works shoulders, abs, hip flexors

Start in a high plank with feet together, a gliding disk under each. Use abs to lift hips, bringing feet as close as possible to hands without bending knees (as shown). Slowly slide back to start for 1 rep. Do 10 to 15 reps.



3 REVERSE CRUNCH

Works abs, hip flexors

Lie faceup, hands at sides on floor, palms down. Push palms into floor as you slowly raise straightened legs to ceiling, lifting lower back off floor a vertebrae at a time (as shown). Lower legs slowly to 1 inch off floor for 1 rep. Do 10 to 15 reps.



4 FLYING HIGH

Works back, glutes, legs

Lie facedown with legs straight, arms extended. Lift chest and legs off floor as high as you can (as shown). Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then lower for 1 rep. Do 10 to 15 reps.



5 BODY SAW

Works shoulders, abs, back

Kneel with hands on gliding disks under shoulders, knees under hips. Push disks forward up to 24 inches (as shown). Press hands into disks and pull them back underneath shoulders for 1 rep. Do 5 to 15 reps.



6 DIP PLANK

Works obliques, shoulders, hips

Start in a side plank, balancing on right forearm with elbow under shoulder, feet stacked (as shown). Lower hips to floor. Lift back to start for 1 rep. Do 10 to 15 reps. Switch sides; repeat. (Make it easier by staggering feet.)



7 THE BIG REACH

Works back, shoulders, glutes

Start in a high plank. Slowly lift left leg and right arm, keeping hips parallel to floor (as shown). Pause; lower arm and leg. Repeat on opposite side for 1 rep. Do 10 to 15 reps.



PERFECT FORM See a demo of each move at Self.com/go/abslab.

