

AB FICTION EXPOSED!

7 MYTHS, MISCONCEPTIONS AND DOWNRIGHT LIES
ABOUT HOW TO GET AND KEEP TERRIFIC ABS --
REVEALED, SHATTERED AND ANSWERED!

BY CLARK BARTRAM, CPT



WARNING

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AB FICTION EXPOSED:

7 Myths, Misconceptions And Downright Lies About How To Get And Keep Terrific Abs -- Revealed, Shattered And Answered!"

As I sat down one day to write an abdominal training article I decided to cruise the internet looking for some new found abdominal training principle I may have overlooked in the past twenty plus years. When I typed in "abdominal training" on Google I saw everything from how to get a six pack in 6 minutes to crazy infomercial gadgets that guarantee success with little or no effort.

With the development of the web and fitness being such a growing category many of these "super sites" are allowing ANYONE contribute articles without any credentials except maybe competing in a local bodybuilding contest. This concerns me to some degree and it should you too.

I'm not here to bash anyone at all, that's not my M/O. I understand sales presentations and I'm all for doing the minimum to get the most, but I'm convinced that we have a dilemma on our hands. EVERYONE seems to be an "expert" these days. I'm seeing more and more of these so called "experts" in many areas of fitness and abdominals seem to be the body part of choice.

Expert (somebody with a great deal of knowledge about, or skill, training, or experience in, a particular field or activity)

Again, I'm not suggesting that they aren't, but how do we know who to trust, especially when no one can seem to agree on anything. What have these people accomplished in their lives, what is their educational background, better yet,

what is their practical experience... do they have abs themselves?

I think you understand where I'm coming from and probably share my frustration. I'm absolutely sure there are many people out there who know much more than I do, and having abs isn't a requirement for having knowledge.

In no way am I claiming to be an "expert" myself, but I do practice what I preach. I have made my living, very publicly I might add, by having ripped abs year round. Does any of that have to do with genetics? Yes, absolutely, (we'll cover that later) but more importantly I have adopted a lifestyle that is conducive to keeping me in business. I've tried almost everything to get ripped and wasted a bunch of money along the way. I think I'm perfectly qualified through "life experience" to help you and try to help you avoid some of the common pitfalls that are out there waiting for you to innocently walk by and fall in.

Anyway, beware of what you read, believe and do; you never know who you're hearing from.

With all of that said I would like to address some MYTHS and MISCONCEPTIONS about abdominal training.

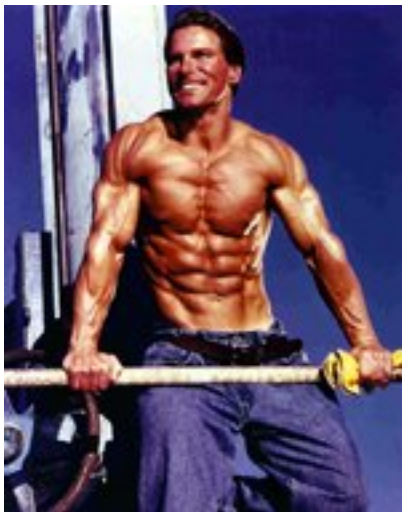
MYTH #1

You'll only get Great Abs by Genetics

True and False! I mentioned earlier that part of my abdominal development was a result of great genetics, so I would be lying myself if I said anything different. Yes, if you have good genetics chances are you won't need to work as hard as someone who doesn't. What does this mean for the person with seemingly poor genetics? NOTHING. You can

still develop great abs. They may not look like Shawn Phillips (most people won't and that is because of genetics and hard work), the big split down the middle of his abs is due to the linea alba having a different structure than mine and yours)

The linea alba is a fibrous structure that runs down the midline of the abdomen in humans and other vertebrates. The name means *white line* and the linea alba is indeed white, being composed mostly of shiny white collagen connective tissue. It is formed by the fusion of the aponeuroses of the abdominal muscles, and it separates the left and right rectus abdominus muscles. In muscular individuals its presence can be seen on the skin, forming the depression between the left and right halves of a "six pack."



See the difference between the line down the center of his abs and mine? His is much more separated. See how he has six visible abs and I have eight? Am I more ripped? NO! Are his genetics different than mine? YES!

Here is another example, maybe something that you can relate to a bit easier.

This is a guy I worked with who was convinced that he would never see his abs and look what he accomplished with hard work and consistency...not to mention a great nutritional program.



So, here is the bottom line, if you train hard, eat right and remain consistent (constantly changing your program) you will get ripped abs!

MYTH #2

You Must Take a Fat Burner to Get Great Abs

Just today, as a matter of fact, I had a big guy 6'8" 350lbs (he is installing an alarm in my house, he is still here as I am writing this) ask me, after he saw my last Ironman cover on my coffee table. "How can I get ripped? Do I need to take a fat burner; I just bought some stuff in Mexico!"

You and I both know what he meant by "stuff" probably something he couldn't have purchased over the counter here in the U.S. Anyway, my point being, nearly everyone I talk to asks about fat burners before they ask about nutrition. This is a big "red flag".

To me too many people buy into the slick advertising campaigns that feature ripped bodybuilders claiming to use the company's products suggesting that is how they got ripped. BIG RIPPED LIE!!!! (Couldn't really say big fat lie now could I?). Don't feel bad however; I've fallen for that lie myself. Will these products help, yes! Do you NEED them? NO!

The first thing I do with everyone I work with is this. I ask them to write down a piece of paper exactly what they eat and drink for the next two days. This does a few things.

Number one It helps me see how serious they are, if I see them in two days and they say "I didn't write it down, but I remember and I can just tell you" that tells me they aren't serious and they aren't ready to work with me.

Second, if they do write it down it obviously helps me understand what improvements need to be made and I can help them along their way.

Lastly, writing down what you eat will often times be a wake up call. When the client actually sees what they are consuming on a daily basis this should help them personally see where they are making mistakes. I/E. Too much food, too much sugar, too many snacks ect...

I will suggest, sometimes, the use of a fat burner when I get them on track, and they stay on track for at least 6-8 weeks, but only if their results start to slow down. It is at that time I feel somewhat more comfortable introducing a fat burner product into their new fitness lifestyle, never before.

Doing this will get them losing body fat again and that will keep them from quitting as this is usually the time most people abandon their fitness routines.

With proper nutrition (I recommend LifeAssess – [click here](#)) you can get ripped without the use of what could be possibly dangerous products, but if you stick to your program and prove to yourself that this is now a “lifestyle” they can help to a degree. I guess I am saying just “don’t put the cart before the horse” and never depend on these things to be what gets you your desired result. Nothing replaces god old hard work and consistency.

MYTH #3

You Need To Do Hundreds Of Crunches To Get Great Abs

I couldn’t disagree more! I see people of all walks of life doing crunches, sit ups, leg raises and other great exercises. The problem, in my humble opinion again, isn’t the exercise selection; it’s the set/rep combination. I’m not going to argue the phasic/tonic aspects of abdominal training either, I’ll leave that to the “experts” however there is legitimacy to that argument, but not for our purposes.

Professor Vladimir Janda, a Czech neurologist and physiatrist with over 50 years experience as a professor, researcher, and physician grouped muscles into postural/ tonic and phasic muscles.

Postural/tonic muscles are oriented toward static support and tend to shorten when stressed; phasic muscles are oriented toward movement and tend to weaken.

What you need to decide for yourself is “why are you training your abs?” If it is to see them visibly I.E. “six pack”

or even better “eight pack” is what I prefer actually. That is how you should decide how you train them. I tend to lean toward common sense when I train. I am a fan of Paul Chek’s information and how he relates everything to function. I personally have never done 100 crunches in my life, nor do I intend to unless I decide to go for “the worlds’ fittest man” record in the Guinness Book of Records.

I am suggesting that you try weighted abdominal exercises and cut back on the reps.

One, because when was the last time you did 100 biceps curls? Why then would you do 100 crunches?

Two, muscle needs to be challenged with resistance in order to respond, grow, hypertrophy!

Many people avoid doing weighted abdominal exercises because they feel they will get a distended abdomen. This won’t happen, trust me! I’ve been doing this for years and my abs are flat and ripped. Most of the distended abs you see in magazines are not a result of doing weighted ab exercises; they are a result of abusing Human Growth Hormone.

Whether you are doing Swiss Ball crunches or slant board sit ups, just try to add some weight for a while and cut back your reps. Give it six weeks or so and see what type of result you get, and soreness, and then you be the judge. After all, you have to do what works for you. That is why I am suggesting this protocol, it works for me.



MYTH #4

I Can Use an Electronic Ab Belt and Get Great Abs

Big fat nasty lie! Period, end of story, case closed Period (Said it twice on purpose). This is where “white lies”, “half truths” and “embellishing” get lots of people confused.

I’m not suggesting that these marketers are flat out lying, but I do feel they stretch the truth a bit and that can be somewhat damaging if not exposed. I happen to be one of “those people” with an abdominal machine, an infomercial and I do sell on the shopping channels, but I do my best (within the guidelines of what is accepted on a mass level) to tell the truth.

I understand that I cannot just go on television and try to sell a product by saying “this is going to be as hard as hell” so there is somewhat of a watering down of a pure message that sometimes happens when you get to that level. I understand where these people are coming from, trust me on this. I also understand when some of these people exaggerate a bit and lead you to believe some things that may not be true, or lessen the fact that you need to eat right.

These abdominal belts, one in particular, that has FDA approval is leading people, like you, to believe that if you strap this thing on you can get ripped abs just by being shocked all day long.

I will agree that it does help someone who may not be able to exercise, or you could use it all day, or it may remind you to draw in your TA, but IT WILL NOT GET YOU RIPPED! And the models that appear on the ads didn’t use it to get ripped. Trust me on that one too, I get the casting notices all of the time. “Wanted, good looking models with ripped abs for abdominal machine infomercial”

What I'm trying to do isn't bash these companies, but I am trying to let you in on the secret that these products won't do what they claim. If I'm wrong and you used one of these and got ripped, please make me aware and I will possibly change my attitude slightly. I just don't want innocent people to be preyed upon.

MYTH #5

I Can Get Great Abs Without Cardio

Probably not! Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but chances are you'll need cardio to help you along your way. Some people, the fortunate few, can get ripped with just nutrition and training alone, but my experience has proven differently for the hundreds, possibly thousands of people I've personally worked with.

I'm not going to get into the argument about when it's best to do your cardio, but I will say I prefer to do mine after I train and my glycogen stores are depleted and I can get right into fat burning mode. Enough said there!

Do cardio and do it whenever you can. In the immortal words of Nike Corp, Just Do It! Cardio choices are obviously very extensive. What works best for me is The Gauntlet because I am using my legs a great deal actually walking up the perpetual staircase. I'm in my recommended heart rate ($220 - \text{your age} \times .65 - .75 = \text{thr}$) within minutes and can easily maintain a great pace that maximizes my time.

Another excellent recommendation I will make is that you train with a heart rate monitor; at least until you know the

feeling of being in your target heart rate otherwise you may be just burning sugar or not effectively burning fat, and who wants to be wasting time on a treadmill or bike?

MYTH #6

I Need To Eliminate Carbs Get Great Abs

I really need to address this two different ways. The first is in a general sense. This isn't true at all and how it became myth was from these "diet" programs that became so commonplace and popular in the early 2000's.

Atkins, Sears, and everyone else who copied them, to make a quick buck took a diet that was meant for extremely obese people, (who were preparing for surgeries, or were in danger of crushing internal organs) and popularized it and basically used it out of its' original context.

The Cleveland Clinic uses The Atkins style diet for heart patients who need to lose weight quick in preparation for surgery. Since this method was so effective for that application it was developed for everyday use and suddenly became very popular.

Will these types of programs help you lose weight, yes of course they will. Do most people need this type of approach to get ripped and see their abs? No!

The second part of the answer has to do with "carb sensitive" people. There are some people who are prone to weight gain if too many of the wrong carbs are consumed. If that happens to be the case with you then a "low carb" approach will be beneficial.

My point, however, is that you cannot or shouldn't eliminate carbs from your daily routine because glycogen and glucose are what is stored in your muscle for energy and keeps them full.

I've done carb depletion to extremes before and my muscle looked stringy and flat to the point where it looked like I had never been in a gym before. The right choices of carbs and the right portions are critical.

When you eat the wrong types of carbs or too many in one sitting the body produces insulin (a fat storing hormone) and the cycle starts. Insulin floods the blood stream, blood sugar falls below normal, you get tired, crave sugary foods; salty foods then you over consume again ending in storing fat. It is much more detailed than that, but that is basically what happens.

Once you get comfortable with your new lifestyle a cyclical approach works well too. What this means is you do some high carb days and some low carb days. Again, I only suggest this either with guidance or by someone who is a bit more experienced.

What most people need to understand and concentrate on is portion control and not eliminating carbs! Only you know if you are carb sensitive, so this will be a game of trial and error for a while. I would suggest first trying portion control, like I just mentioned. Eat portionally balanced meals with good carbs, healthy fat and lean protein.

[LifeAssess™](#) is an excellent tool that will help you determine exactly what those needs are for your particular genetic makeup. My personal ratios are 45% carbs 35% protein and 20% fats.

So, do yourself a favor and develop a "lifestyle" that you can maintain so once you get ripped you stay ripped.

MYTH #7

I Had a Baby So my Abs Will Never Get Tight Again

This is obviously another one of those individual situations where most often this belief is a myth. I've seen countless women rebound from multiple births and have excellent abdominal development. Here are two examples. The photo below is me and my wife Anita; she has had two children and is in her 40's and in my opinion has wonderfully flat abs without being offensive and too much.



Clark and Anita Bartram/ Photo courtesy of Michael Neveux

Even though she has appeared on three covers with me, she is just like every other "fitness enthusiast" out there. She loves to train, but has a busy life raising our children, taking

care of the house, training a few clients and putting up with me! She has worked very hard and has had her many frustrations as well. You should read her chapter in my book Spiritually Fit, she really explains what it is like being married to a professional fitness model and the pressure that goes with that.

Here is another great example of a mother of four. Kim is the wife of a great friend of mine and I happen to work with both of them. Kim has a great lean stomach and is as every bit as busy as the next person. She isn't genetically superior either, I've seen photos of her when she was younger and she was carrying around some body fat.



Kim/photo courtesy of Garrett Photo

The bottom line is this, use everything you have available to you. Practice everything you just learned, change your attitude and KNOW that you can have success with the proper mental outlook.

I do want to mention something that will help in the area of the mind. Try Jon Benson's [M-Power Total Transformation Series](#). Jon is, without a doubt, one of the best teachers/motivators in our industry. What separates him from everyone else is his comprehensive program. They are tried and true mental strategies that will help even the most frustrated person get over the many hurdles life throws in our way. He also practices what he preaches. He has used most all of his information in his own life to transform his mind, body and attitude to become one of the most recognizable names in the business.

Be sure to do the Transverse Abdominus exercises I demonstrate in the Chisel Your Abs DVD to help flatten your stomach. I go into detail about this on my Ten Mid Section Miracle Moves e-book and show you exactly how to flatten your abs the right way, even after a baby!

In Conclusion

I hope I helped squelch some myths, misconceptions and lies and didn't further confuse you as to how you can have ripped abs.

To summarize, we are all individuals so there is no "program" that will work for everyone. You will go through some trial and error, frustration and possibly a few set backs, but you can have the abs you desire. It is simply a matter of you deciding once and for all that you are ready, willing and able to put in the work necessary because work will be required.

It is definitely worth every bit of effort you will put out, both for the aesthetic and functional benefits you will gain as a result.

Now you are armed with all the tools and information you need to get the abs of your dreams. Put all of that into practice and before you know it you'll be writing ab articles on my web site!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

CLARK BARTRAM, CPT