

## DEAD BUG

Everyone wants a flat stomach, maybe even a rippled 6 pack yet in my years of gym work, most people do the wrong exercises the wrong way to achieve this. Plus the world seems hell bent on doing sit-ups and yet they aren't that good at supporting the back. So here's what I think you should be doing. I call it the '**Dead Bug**'.

**Rectus abdominis** : the six pack.

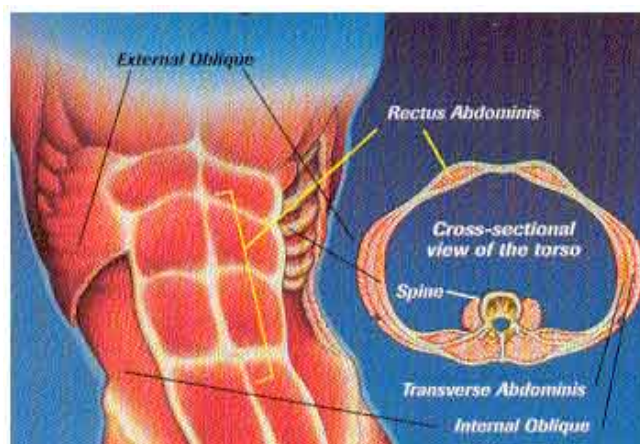
Function mainly to keep the body upright if something is pulling the body backwards out of balance. Doesn't really flatten the stomach, nor support the back.

**Internal and external obliques** :

Have a similar role to rectus but because of their angle are more involved in twisting or rotatory shifts off balance, such as carrying a briefcase or laptop.

**Transverse abdominals: (TVA)**

These are the 'core stabilizers' of the torso. Pilates and yoga often focus on this muscle group. The **dead bug** is all about ensuring it works correctly. The TVA act like a corset when they contract and form a brace for the lumbar spine by tensioning the lumbar vertebrae that it attaches to. No other muscle is known to have this effect. The TVA is a postural muscle—it needs to be worked over a time period, and should be exercised regularly. It should be exercised in conjunction with the pelvic floor but it is very important that your breathing pattern is NOT linked to it's contraction otherwise you can end up with additional problems.



1. In position on the floor hands under your lower back to maintain a lordosis and to monitor correct form—your spine should be pressing down onto your fingers throughout.
2. Contract your pelvic floor—(stop peeing!)
3. Draw the TVA in tight –remember it's like a corset. Think of drawing your belly button to your spine, or bracing against a punch This should bring pressure of your spine onto your fingers.
4. Maintaining normal breathing with your diaphragm and extend one leg then return it to position before alternating legs. Hold the TVA contraction throughout. (I may have told you a variation in leg positions—follow these changes as suggested)
5. Take your time with the legs—it should take about 45 seconds for the set of 20 (or 10 breathes at normal rate)
6. Do 3 sets of 20 repetitions.
7. Do this exercise daily. If it's part of a gym routine—do it at the start of your workout. Otherwise try and do it near the start of the day.
8. Aim to do still be doing this when you're 80!.