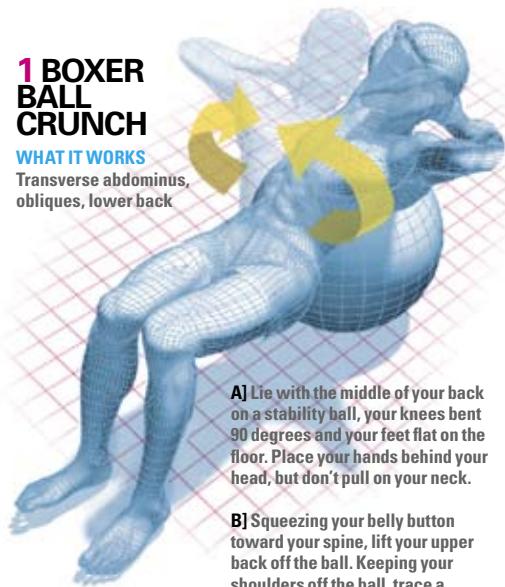


1 BOXER BALL CRUNCH

WHAT IT WORKS
Transverse abdominus, obliques, lower back



A] Lie with the middle of your back on a stability ball, your knees bent 90 degrees and your feet flat on the floor. Place your hands behind your head, but don't pull on your neck.

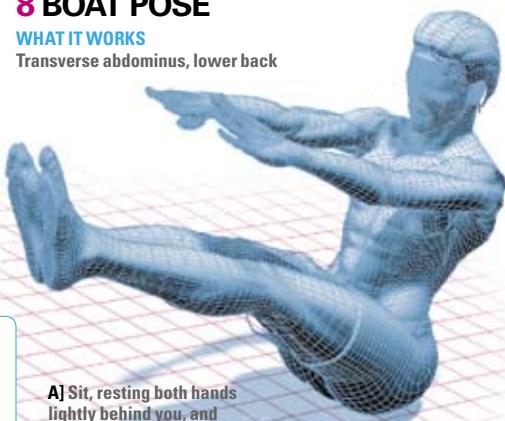
B] Squeezing your belly button toward your spine, lift your upper back off the ball. Keeping your shoulders off the ball, trace a clockwise oval with your torso. Apply pressure with your lower back to keep the ball still through the entire motion. After 15 clockwise ovals, trace 15 counterclockwise.

WHY IT WORKS

Despite the straightforward motion of the bike, your body moves in three directions: forward as you head down the road, vertically as your legs pedal up and down, and laterally as your hips and upper body rock side to side. "This fluid, circular exercise builds control," says Street, and that helps you minimize lateral torsion and wasted motion.

8 BOAT POSE

WHAT IT WORKS
Transverse abdominus, lower back



A] Sit, resting both hands lightly behind you, and lean back until your torso is at a 45-degree angle.

B] Keeping your legs together, lift them off the floor as you extend arms forward at shoulder height. Abs are tight, as thighs and torso form a 90-degree angle. If your hamstrings are tight, you'll need to bend your knees a little. Work up to holding for 60 seconds.

WHY IT WORKS

As with the plank, this pose builds the lower-back stability and core strength needed to remain bent over the handlebar for hours, or to blast up hills without compromising power or speed.

2 POWER BRIDGE

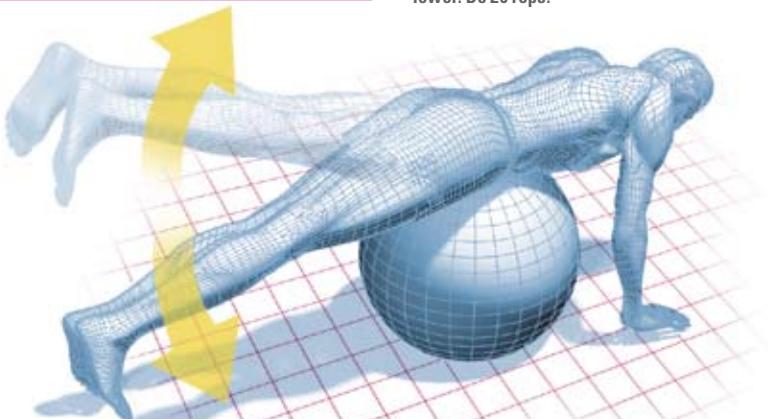
WHAT IT WORKS
Hip flexors, glutes, lower back

A] Lying on your back, bend your knees and place your heels near your glutes. Arms are at your sides, palms down.

B] In one smooth motion, squeeze your glutes, raise your hips off the floor and push up from your heels to form a straight line from shoulders to knees; toes come off the floor slightly. Hold for two seconds. Keeping your toes raised, lower yourself three-quarters of the way to complete one rep. Do 20 repetitions.

WHY IT WORKS

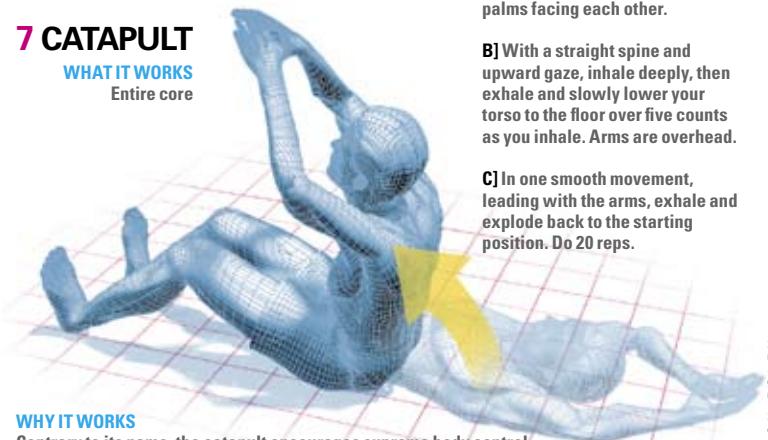
In addition to stretching the hip flexors, often extremely stiff in cyclists, the bridge strengthens the link between your lower back and glutes.



WHY IT WORKS
This movement builds backside strength, for added efficiency on the second half of the pedal stroke.

7 CATAPULT

WHAT IT WORKS
Entire core



WHY IT WORKS

Contrary to its name, the catapult encourages supreme body control.

3 HIP EXTENSION

WHAT IT WORKS
Lower back, hamstrings, glutes

A] Lying with your hips and stomach on the stability ball, put your hands on the floor directly under your shoulders, and extend your legs with toes resting on the floor.

B] With a straight spine and shoulder blades back, as if you're trying to make them touch, lift both legs off the floor, keeping them straight. If possible, raise them slightly higher than parallel to the floor. Hold for two seconds and lower. Do 20 reps.

Bicycling

FOR MORE FREE DOWNLOADS, GO TO BICYCLING.COM/FREE.

4 PLANK

WHAT IT WORKS

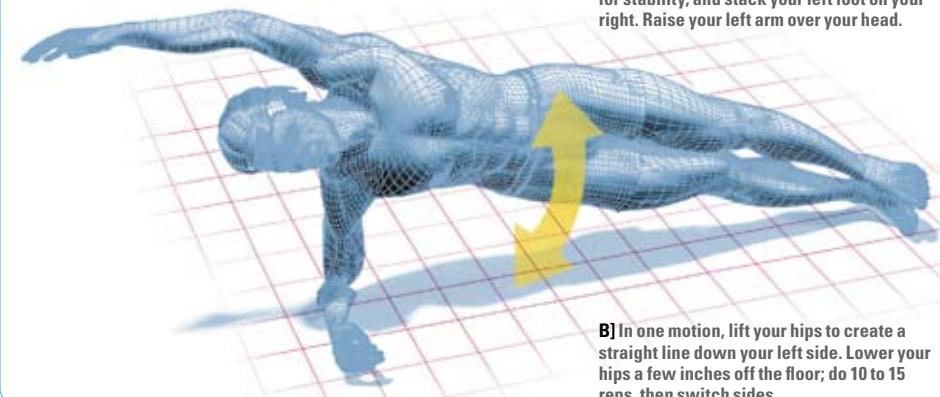
Transverse abdominus, upper and lower back

A] Lying on your stomach, place your elbows under your shoulders with forearms and hands on the floor.

B] Lift your hips off the floor, keeping your back straight and abs tight, and rest on your toes. Aim for 60 seconds.

WHY IT WORKS

The plank builds the strength and muscular endurance you need to ride powerfully in the drops or in an aero position long after others have surrendered to the top of the handlebar.



5 TRANSVERSE PLANK

WHAT IT WORKS

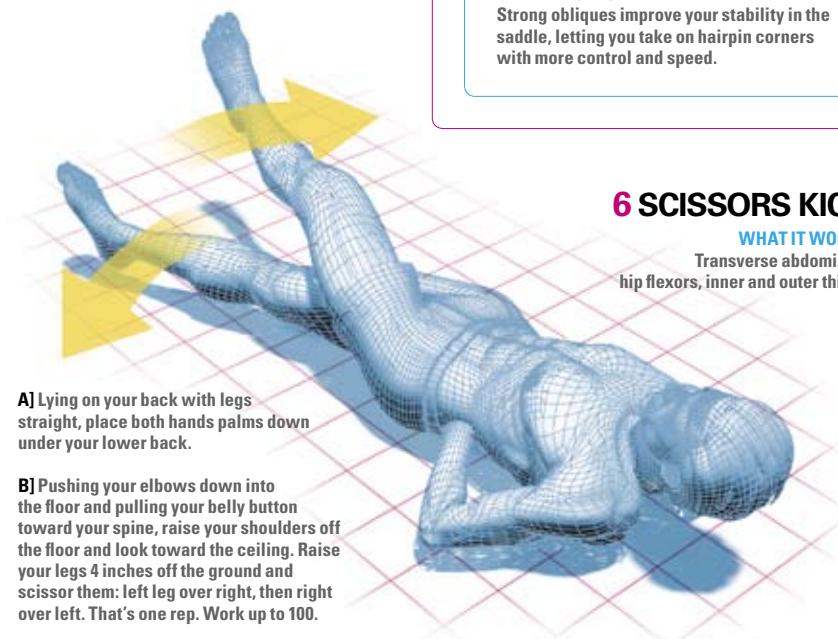
Transverse abdominus and obliques

A] Lie on your right side, with your right elbow under your shoulder, forearm in front for stability, and stack your left foot on your right. Raise your left arm over your head.

B] In one motion, lift your hips to create a straight line down your left side. Lower your hips a few inches off the floor; do 10 to 15 reps, then switch sides.

WHY IT WORKS

Strong obliques improve your stability in the saddle, letting you take on hairpin corners with more control and speed.



6 SCISSORS KICK

WHAT IT WORKS

Transverse abdominus, hip flexors, inner and outer thighs

A] Lying on your back with legs straight, place both hands palms down under your lower back.

B] Pushing your elbows down into the floor and pulling your belly button toward your spine, raise your shoulders off the floor and look toward the ceiling. Raise your legs 4 inches off the ground and scissor them: left leg over right, then right over left. That's one rep. Work up to 100.

WHY IT WORKS

A comprehensive movement that connects key cycling muscles, the kick also builds inner-thigh muscles, which help you achieve hip, knee and forefoot alignment for a proper and efficient pedal stroke. **B**

BURNING QUESTIONS

WHY DOES MY BACK HURT?

Lower-back pain is related to core strength, or lack thereof. "In a leg press at the gym, you can press into the back pad to stabilize yourself," says Andy Pruitt, Ed.D., director of Colorado's Boulder Center for Sports Medicine, "but when you push on the pedal, there's nothing to stabilize you except your core." If it's weak, your back fatigues quickly. The pain could also stem from other sources, Pruitt notes, from your cycling shoes to bike fit. A good rule of thumb: Your handlebar shouldn't be more than one fist-width lower than your saddle, says Pruitt, who suggests a bike fitting for those with chronic back pain. "If a fitter can't solve your problem in two tries, see a doctor or physical therapist," he says.

WHY DO I STILL HAVE A GUT?

You log thousands of miles a year, but your jersey fits like a sausage casing. The problem isn't a lack of fitness; it's consuming too many calories. Slouching could be exacerbating it. Good posture builds a strong core, but these days we hunch over a steering wheel to get to work, where we hunch over a computer. For a break, we hunch over a handlebar. To shrink your gut, add interval training to your rides to boost calorie burn, lay off the Dunkin' Donuts at rest stops and start training your core.

CAN I STRENGTHEN MY CORE WHILE ON THE BIKE?

These geeky yet effective exercises by Marc Evans, a former USA Triathlon head coach and owner of EvansCoaching.com, in Menlo Park, California, work your core on the roll. The key is the Draw In position: Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Squeeze your belly button toward your spine; your pelvis should tilt slightly upward, causing your lower back to be flush with the floor. Try to replicate this on the bike. Evans recommends mastering these moves on a trainer first. For each, do three sets of three 15-second holds; rest 15 seconds between reps.

- **AERO POSITION** Rest on your aerobar, if you have one, or place your forearms on the top of the handlebar. As you draw in, your back flattens and your pelvis rotates.
- **SINGLE LEG** Seated with your hands on the hoods, unclip your left foot. As your right foot pedals, extend your left leg back and draw in. Continue to draw in as you clip back into the pedal. Repeat with right leg.
- **OVERHEAD** Raise your arms overhead and draw in; squeeze the top tube with your knees. (Don't attempt on the road unless you have the handling skills of Tom Boonen.)
- **STANDING DRAW IN** With hands on the hoods, stand and bend at the hips. Draw in until your back is flat and pelvis tilts.—*D.M.*