

# NOT CRUNCHES AGAIN!

by Adam Traynor

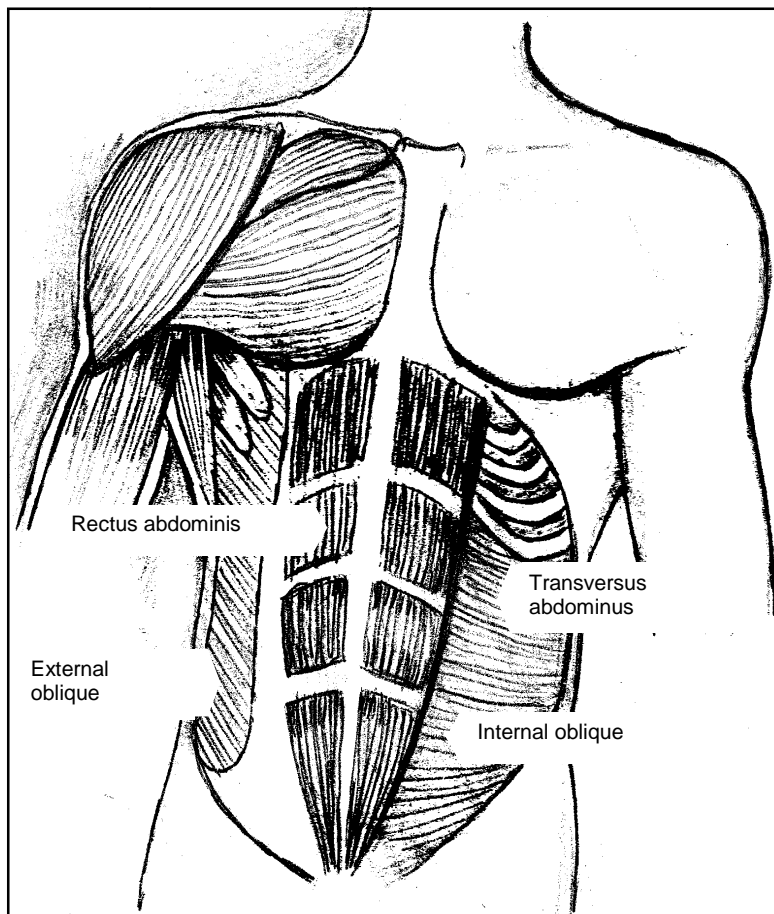
You don't want a six-pack, so you don't do abdominal work... it takes care of itself. To a certain extent for some individuals, that's true, however crunches are important for the development of a strong midsection for combat sports and strength. A strong midsection (core if you wish) is needed for lifting stability.



Here's one exercise that can be varied – one that really hits your lower abdominal muscles:

## the reverse crunch.

Lie on your back, knees bent, feet together and about 12 inches off the floor – if you are in a bench, hold the sides, if you are on the floor put your hands under your pelvis. Maintaining the



bent-knee position, pull your knee slowly to your chest. Contract the abs. Make sure that the hips and lower back come off the floor. Hold and repeat for as many times as required.

If you start with your legs straight, the exercise becomes the **leg pull-in**, note that the finish position is the same.

To bring the upper abdominals into play, bring your legs over your head to touch the floor.

The muscles involved: [see illustration] the *rectus abdominis*; *external* and *internal obliques*.

The *rectus abdominis* muscle is recognised by most as the (main) abdominal muscles. However the anterolateral abdominal wall is composed of skin, fascia and four pairs of flat sheet-like muscles: *rectus abdominis*, *external oblique*, *internal oblique*, and *transversus abdominis*.

Bodybuilders are concerned with the *appearance* of the midsection. However, more importantly, the midsection [front and back] needs exercise to stabilize the lower back and maintain good abdominal tone.