

10 tools to get you toned

Melt muffin top, resize your thighs and wave arm flab good-bye with a little help from the fitness tools you told SELF you're dying to try. Our gizmo guide gives you the 411 on your soon-to-be favorites, plus fun, effective moves to master. This stuff *will* make you slim!

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TRIED IT? CHECK IT OFF!

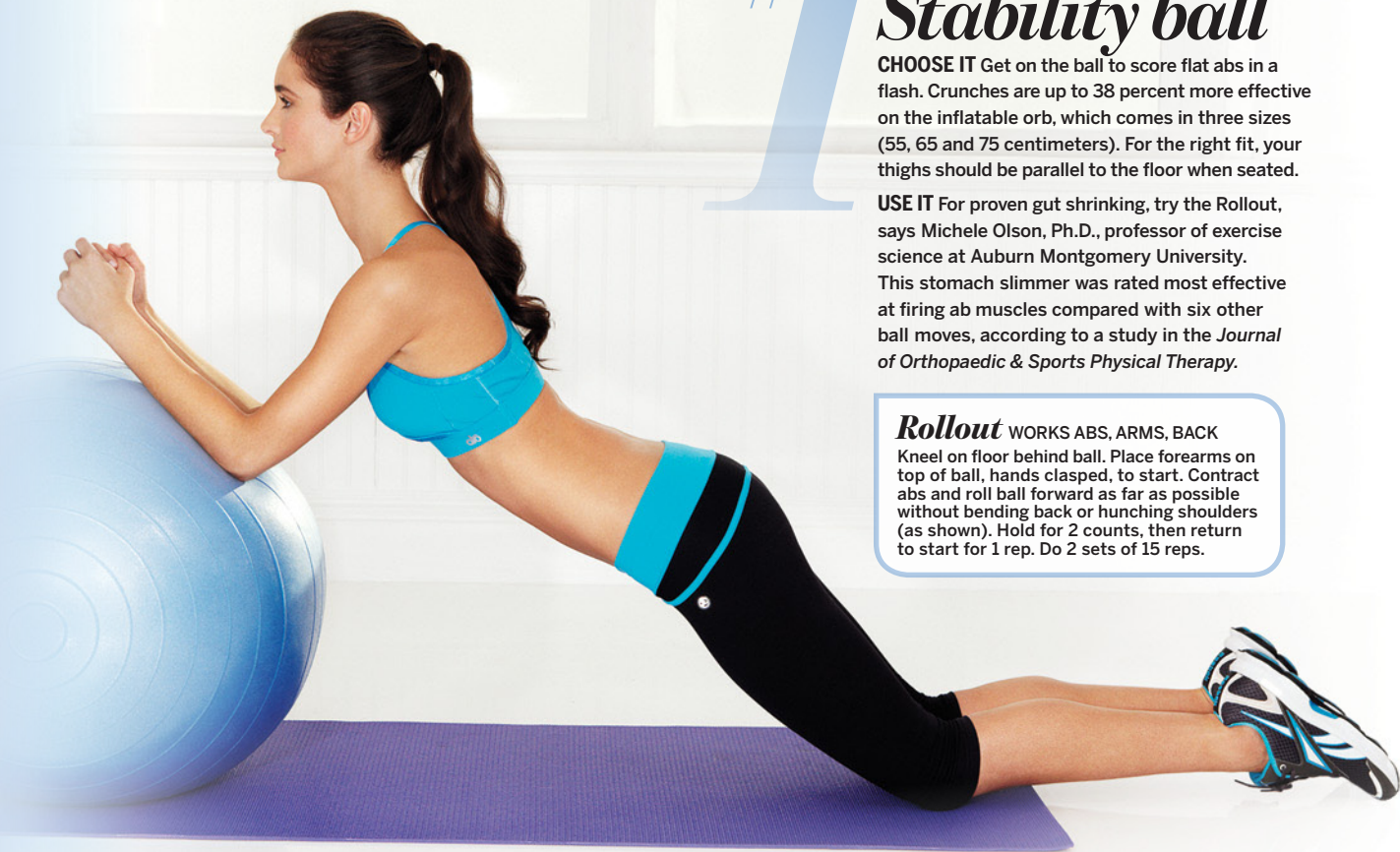
- Stability ball
- Medicine ball
- Kettlebell
- BOSU
- Body Bar
- Step
- Foam roller
- Yoga block
- Pilates ring
- Trampoline

STILL LIVES: LEVI BROWN



Want to look this good? Have a ball (and a block, a bar and a step) at the gym.

OPPOSITE
Hone at home with your very own gear. We snagged our tools at Power Systems.com.



#1 Stability ball

CHOOSE IT Get on the ball to score flat abs in a flash. Crunches are up to 38 percent more effective on the inflatable orb, which comes in three sizes (55, 65 and 75 centimeters). For the right fit, your thighs should be parallel to the floor when seated.

USE IT For proven gut shrinking, try the Rollout, says Michele Olson, Ph.D., professor of exercise science at Auburn Montgomery University. This stomach slimmer was rated most effective at firing ab muscles compared with six other ball moves, according to a study in the *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy*.

Rollout WORKS ABS, ARMS, BACK
Kneel on floor behind ball. Place forearms on top of ball, hands clasped, to start. Contract abs and roll ball forward as far as possible without bending back or hunching shoulders (as shown). Hold for 2 counts, then return to start for 1 rep. Do 2 sets of 15 reps.



#3 Kettlebell

CHOOSE IT Quick physics: Because all of a kettlebell's weight (5 to 100-plus pounds) is in the cast-iron ball, not the handle, momentum is on your side during swinging moves, so you can likely hoist twice your typical heft. The quirky shape (teapot sans spout) also creates a long lever, providing unique resistance during static strength moves.

USE IT The Gunslinger capitalizes on that leverage, leaving your biceps no choice but to get buff!

Gunslinger WORKS BICEPS
Stand with feet hip-width apart. Hold kettlebell in right hand at side. Keeping elbow at side, curl bell toward right shoulder until bottom of bell is pointed forward like a pistol (as shown). Lower to start. Do 12 reps. Repeat on opposite side.



#4 BOSU

CHOOSE IT If you cut a stability ball in half and slapped a plastic base on it, you'd get the BOSU. Think of this balance trainer as a surfboard for landlubbers: Staying steady while standing on it activates your abs.

USE IT Most people stand on the squishy side, but for an even more effective balance challenge, flip the BOSU over (it does mean "both sides up"), says Rich Barretta, who owns a private training studio in New York City. Now you're working to steady yourself and the BOSU, so during our tush-tightening, saddlebag-busting Side Kick, your abs are working...their butts off!

Side Kick WORKS ABS, HIPS, BUTT
Stand with right foot centered on flat side of BOSU; step left foot back and to right on floor, arms out to sides at shoulder height. Balance on BOSU, swinging left foot out to side at hip level (as shown). Return to start. Do 10 reps. Switch sides; repeat.



#2 Medicine ball

CHOOSE IT A soft, weighted medicine ball is as versatile as dumbbells but easier to hang on to, especially during dynamic moves that require twisting, swinging or throwing. (Ever try hurling a dumbbell? Don't!) The balls range in size from 2 to 30 pounds. Start with a 4-pounder; if you can fly through 12 reps unfazed, increase by 2-pound increments until you feel fatigued by the final rep, says Paul Katami, a trainer in Hollywood, California.

USE IT The power-packed Suitcase Crunch does double duty, sculpting jiggle-free arms while taming your tummy.

Suitcase Crunch WORKS ABS, SHOULDERS, BUTT
Lie faceup with legs straight, arms extended behind head; hold ball with both hands above floor. Bring left knee toward chest as you lift upper back off floor and bring ball to left foot (as shown). Return to start. Repeat on opposite side for 1 rep. Do 2 sets of 12 reps.



#5 Body Bar

CHOOSE IT Unlike a barbell, the weight on a Body Bar is evenly distributed along its 4-foot length, keeping you balanced. (Imagine you're a tightrope walker.) The bars are covered in rubber for a comfy grip and range in size from 4 to 36 pounds. Start with an intermediate-level 12-pound bar and go heavier or lighter from there, suggests Lashaun Dale, national creative manager for Equinox Fitness Clubs.

USE IT Grip the bar during our bootylicious Pullover Bridge to fight arm flab and keep your body in proper alignment.

Pullover Bridge WORKS BUTT, ARMS, ABS, THIGHS
Lie faceup with knees bent, feet flat, hips lifted; hold bar at waist with both hands to start. Lower hips to floor as you extend right leg, bend elbows and reach bar behind head (as shown). Return to start. Repeat on opposite side for 1 rep. Do 20 reps.

#6 Step

CHOOSE IT This is no '80s flashback—the deck popular in high-impact aerobics classes is also a universal toning tool. Add risers to customize the height on this use-anywhere weight bench, Dale says.

USE IT Who says you have to stay horizontal? Do the Decline Squat to downsize your butt and thighs while going easy on knees. Standing downhill helps perfect your form: You can sink deep into the squat without bringing knees too far over ankles.

Decline Squat

WORKS ABS, BUTT, THIGHS
Put three risers under one side of deck. Stand facing downhill, arms extended at shoulder height. Squat, then move right heel down step, toes up (as shown). Stand, extending right leg forward at hip height, bringing arms behind you. Return to start. Repeat on opposite side for 1 rep. Do 2 sets of 12 reps.



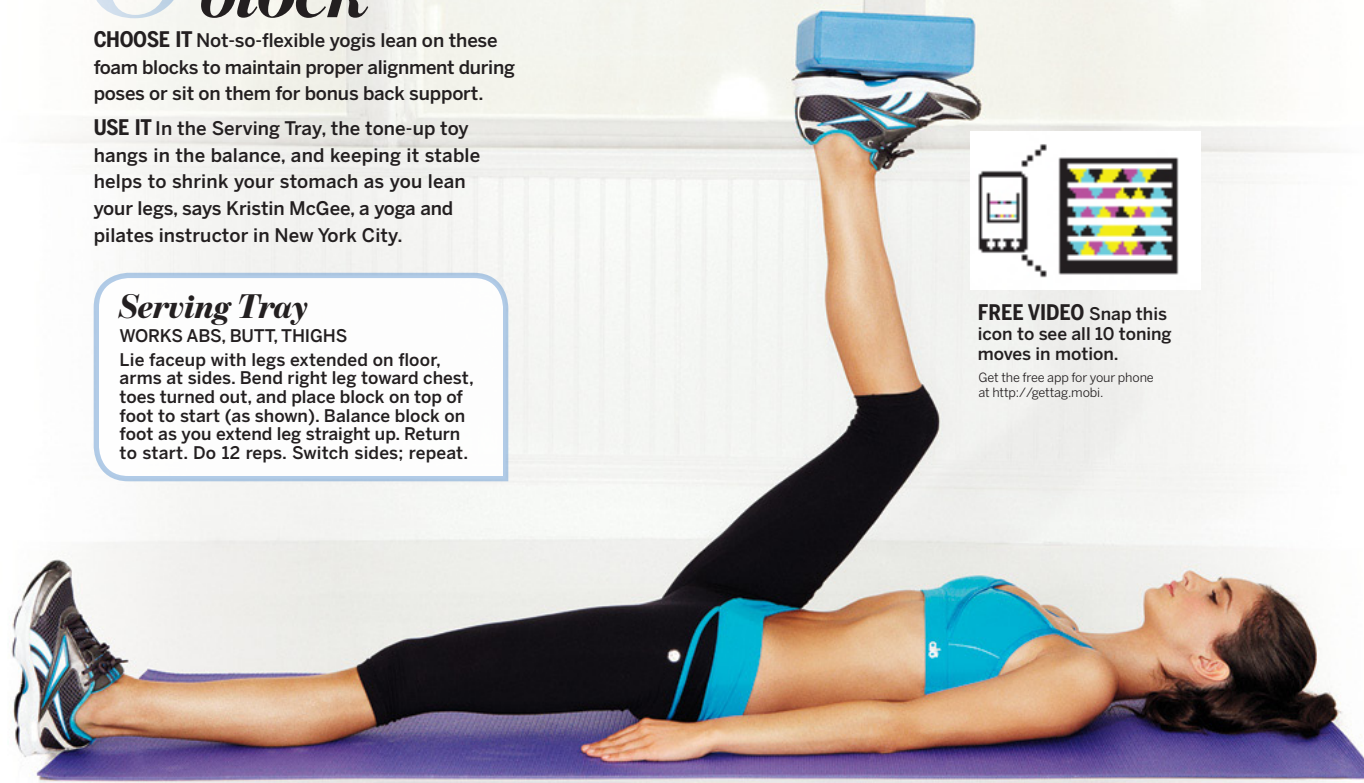
#8 Yoga block

CHOOSE IT Not-so-flexible yogis lean on these foam blocks to maintain proper alignment during poses or sit on them for bonus back support.

USE IT In the Serving Tray, the tone-up toy hangs in the balance, and keeping it stable helps to shrink your stomach as you lean your legs, says Kristin McGee, a yoga and pilates instructor in New York City.

Serving Tray

WORKS ABS, BUTT, THIGHS
Lie faceup with legs extended on floor, arms at sides. Bend right leg toward chest, toes turned out, and place block on top of foot to start (as shown). Balance block on foot as you extend leg straight up. Return to start. Do 12 reps. Switch sides; repeat.



FREE VIDEO Snap this icon to see all 10 toning moves in motion. Get the free app for your phone at <http://gettag.mobi>.

#9 Pilates ring

CHOOSE IT Pilates devotees believe in the Magic Circle—a 13-inch soft rubber ring with comfort grips that adds resistance to basic body-weight exercises.

USE IT Pining for a pilates patootie? Step into the ring and you'll increase the tush-toning power of a standard squat by 50 percent, according to a study from *The Journal of Applied Research*.

Ring Squat

WORKS BUTT, HIPS, THIGHS
Stand with ring around thighs, feet hip-width apart. Press out into ring as you squat (as shown) until thighs are almost parallel to floor. Return to start. Do 3 sets of 8 reps.



#7 Foam roller

CHOOSE IT Foam tubes come in 12-inch and 3-foot sizes and are generally used for rolling out tight, achy muscles, especially in the quads, hamstrings and calves. The fancy name for the technique is self-myofascial release—it's basically a sports massage minus the masseuse.

USE IT The roller also has your back: Lying on it during the Treasure Chest releases tension in the muscles around your spine and forces you to balance, for firmer abs, says trainer DeAnna Bellamy, a corrective exercise specialist and owner of Body Revolution in Chicago.

Treasure Chest

WORKS CHEST, SHOULDERS, TRICEPS, BACK, ABS, HIPS
Lie faceup on roller with head supported, knees bent and feet flat. Hold a 5-pound dumbbell in each hand, arms bent 90 degrees. Contract abs to stabilize and extend arms up (as shown). Return to start. Do 2 sets of 15 reps.



#10 Trampoline

CHOOSE IT Hopping on a mini-trampoline, also known as an urban rebounder, is 68 percent more effective than running on a treadmill at a similar heart rate and oxygen intake, a NASA study finds. You can jump off the jiggle and go easy on your joints.

USE IT There's no bouncing but plenty of benefit with the Trampoline Jackknife. The rebounder's unstable surface recruits even your deepest ab muscles, says fitness expert Jonathan Roche, who developed a trampoline workout system for Gaiam.

Trampoline Jackknife

WORKS ABS
Sit on trampoline, back at a 45-degree angle, knees bent, feet on floor. Grip sides of trampoline. Maintain tilt as you bring knees toward chest (as shown). Return to start. Do 2 sets of 15 reps.



Styling, Lida Moore Musso; hair, Jason Murillo for Sebastian Professional; makeup, Joy Fennell for Dior Beauty; prop styling, Charlotte Malmlof. See Get-It Guide.