

HARD CORE

Your middle is your body's powerhouse.

BY ASHLEY MATEO

Hair and makeup by George Kyriakos for Honey Artists; styling by Gabriella Porcari; top: Ultrason; sports bra: Lululemon; leggings: Old Navy; sneakers: New Balance

FORGET SIX-PACK ABS—a strong core isn't about aesthetics. "Your core is literally your foundation," says Raven Jelks (shown here), an ACE-certified trainer at Solidcore in New York City. Not only is it the center point around which your entire body moves, but it's also one of the most supportive areas. "When your core is weak, you're more at risk for injuries, especially in your back," she explains.

Solidcore's high-intensity, low-impact resistance classes are all about developing that functional core strength through slow, controlled movements that keep your muscles under tension, which recruits and strengthens extra muscle fibers, explains Jelks.

Yes, it's hard (really hard). And your body *will* start to shake. But fight to finish the rep! "You *want* to get to that stage of muscle failure," says Jelks. Failure is a good thing in this case. "Strength training creates tiny tears in the muscles that your body repairs and rebuilds, making you better equipped for your next workout," she explains. "Until you push yourself to the absolute limit, you cannot get stronger."

Ready to give it a try? Jelks demonstrates a slow-burn workout created just for *Health*—turn the page to check it out!



WATCH THE WORKOUT
Hover your phone's camera over the smart code to do the workout along with Raven.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY CUNANAN

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