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**7 EXERCISES TO GET YOU bikini fit**

with **Marika Pederson,** Ontario Racquet Club



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# GET *beach* READY in Six Weeks

BY KATHY BUCKWORTH PHOTOS BY STEVE UHRANEY

Good riddance winter. The groundhog and his famous shadow have come and gone. This year's harsh deep freeze provided us with the perfect excuse to hunker down, layer up, and console ourselves with warm, satisfying meals...resulting in the casting of our own larger shadows.

Spring is finally here and it's time to make your own six week prediction: Start now and just in time for summer you'll be stepping out of the shadows and into the sun, looking slimmed down, toned up, and beach ready. It's a formula even a critter like Warton Willie could follow: Eat smart and exercise.

First, the eating part. Nadine Hughes, owner of the Cooks Companion, a lifestyle and cooking educational school, ([www.thecookscompanion.ca](http://www.thecookscompanion.ca)), offers these easy to follow "slimming down" tips:

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals. You will be less likely to overeat, your energy will be higher and your body will burn calories more efficiently.
- Make breakfast the most important meal of your day. The fat burning process is most active in the morning, and fat storage - in the evening.
- Reduce your salt intake. Stay away from packaged foods and skip the saltshaker, all of which can lead to excess sodium in your blood, leading to water retention.
- Make a water bottle your friend. Women should drink 2.2 litres per day, 3.0 litres for men.
- Eat lighter, fresher tasting foods like salads, fresh fruits, fresh fish and lean meats such as pork and chicken.

Having the weight slowly peel off through a modified diet is one thing, but if you want to crank up the engine that burns the calories, and see some toning and definition, there's no escaping the hard work that needs to be done through exercise.

**Where to start?**

Marika Pederson, Personal Trainer at the Ontario Racquet Club knows just where most of us want to focus. "Training your core creates a centre of power and includes belly and low back. To effectively strengthen your core, you need to include exercises for legs and glutes"

She recommends these targeted exercises for the best beach body, but advises that a mix of cardio and toning is required for maximum results.

**1. Seated V's**

Sitting upright, legs in V-position, torso facing right leg, left arm anchored to floor

in front, right arm behind. Lift right leg (toes pointed, knees unlocked), pulse slowly for 10-15 reps. Repeat with feet flexed. Don't lean back, exhale as you lift. Switch legs, arm positions, and repeat two sets.

**2. Towel Single Leg Squats**

Wrap towel around sturdy object like staircase railing. Holding towel taut, arms extended, squat to 90-degree angle, pushing weight through heels. With feet together, lift right leg forward, squatting on one leg into sit position. Exhale as you lift up from squat and squeeze gluts throughout move.

**3. Ab Circles**

Crunch position, knees bent, feet on floor. Fists are glued to chin, chin tucked slightly under to follow roll of back, belly scooped. Relax neck. Keeping back slightly rounded and belly scooped, curl up and circle torso to right, 8x. Exhale at highest point of circle. Repeat with circles to left.

**4. Double Crunch Hip Lifts**

Torso on floor, elbows wide, hands by ears, head heavy in hands. Legs extended up, heels to ceiling. Switch between heel lifts to ceiling (for low belly fibres), and crunches (for upper fibres). Do hip lift 8x/crunch 8x. Alternate 4x per, then 2x per then alternate one of each. Finish with a double crunch (crunch and heel lift together) for 15x.

**5. Climbing Rope Curls**

Crunch position, knees bent, feet on floor. Reach right arm up to grab imaginary rope, slowly reach left arm higher to grab, and "climb" 2 more times. Unravel the same way down, slowly.

**6. Double Crunch Twists**

Crunch position on floor, knees bent legs at 90-degree angle off floor, elbows wide, head heavy in hands. 'Double crunch' (crunching from both ends in), so that knees come to chest, chest to knees. Angle knees to right as torso angle left to challenge obliques as you crunch. Crunch, exhale, then extend legs long. Alternate sides or repeat same side 8x, then switch.

**7. Torso Rotation**

Lie on floor, with legs at 90-degree angle off floor, arms out in "t" position on floor. Anchoring shoulders on floor with arms spread, lower legs to right, rotating torso. Alternate slowly side-to-side, exhaling on exertion.

You have six weeks. Now go. With any luck, following these diet and exercise tips will have you on the beach proudly showing a former shadow of your previous self. **GOODLIFE**