

# Jack Knife

*Equipment Needed: Floor Mat*

## Start at this Position:

- **Note:** This is an advanced exercise, requiring exceptional abdominal strength. You should not perform this exercise if you have any lower back or neck problems. If you feel any pain, **STOP IMMEDIATELY!**
- Lie with your back on the mat, feet flat on the floor, and legs slightly apart.
- Extend your arms overhead, keeping your elbows outward. *Note: You may also overlap your hands by resting one palm on top of the other. Refer to Figure A.*
- Using your abdominals, lift your head to create a tennis-ball-sized gap between your chin and chest.
- Extend your legs, keeping them together and maintaining a slight bend in your knees. If you prefer, you may perform this exercise with your ankles crossed (as shown).
- Raise your legs a couple of inches off the mat. Keep the small of your back in contact with the mat by pulling your belly button in towards your spine.
- Keep your head aligned with your spine.

## Steps to Performing the Exercise:

### 1. Start Position



Exhale as you slowly crunch, simultaneously raising your upper and lower body.

### 2. Middle Position



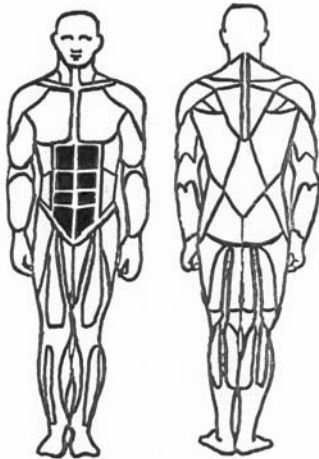
Continue to crunch your upper and lower body until they are both approximately at a 45-degree angle to the mat.

### 3. End Position



Now continue to raise your upper body closer to your feet, using your arms to assist you. Keep your lower body stationary. Hold for 1/2 a second, squeezing your abdominals.

*Note: Do not jerk your body or use momentum.*



**Region: Abdominals**

- Primary Muscle Worked: Upper Abdominals, Lower Abdominals

**Focus on Your Form:**

- Throughout the entire range of motion:
  - Keep your head aligned with your spine.
  - Keep your chin aligned with the middle of your chest.
  - Keep your arms extended, and elbows bent outward.
  - Keep your legs together and extended, and maintain a slight bend in your knees.
  - Concentrate on using your abdominals to perform the exercise.
- **At end position, do not jerk your body or use momentum.**
- Keep the small of your back in contact with the mat to alleviate unnecessary stress on your back.
  - **Do not perform this exercise if you feel discomfort in your lower back.**

**4. Return to Middle**



Inhale as you slowly return to start position.

**5. Return to Start**



Do not let your legs touch the mat. The small of your back remains in contact with the mat and you have maintained the tennis-ball-sized gap between your chin and chest. Repeat the movement for the recommended number of repetitions.

*Figure A*

