

HEALTHY HABITS

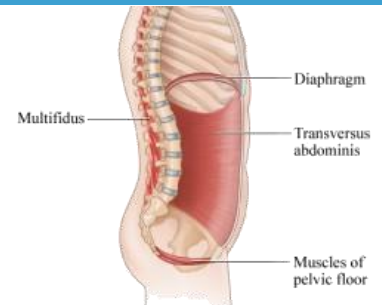
STRONG CORE

What is the core?

The core is comprised of more than just your abs and back – it also includes the diaphragm, pelvic floor, transverse abdominus, and multifidus.

Why is a strong core important?

A strong core leads to the improvement of everyday life, injury prevention, chronic back pain reduction, balance and stability, and enhanced sports performance.



Exercises for the Core



Lie on your back, knees bent at a 90-degree angle and feet flat on the ground. Raise your head and shoulders off the floor. To avoid straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest or touch ears with your hands rather than locking them behind your head. Return to the starting position and repeat 12-15 times. Do this sequence 3 times.



Lie on your back with your knees bent. Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten your abdominal muscles. Raise hips off the floor until aligned with your knees and shoulders. Hold for 3 deep breaths. Return to the start position and repeat.



Keep your torso straight and rigid and your body in a straight line from ears to toes with no sagging or bending. Your head is relaxed as you look at the floor. Hold the position for 10 seconds. Over time, work up to 30, 45 or 60 seconds.



Lie on your back, knees bent at a 90-degree angle and feet flat on the ground. Place your hands behind your head to support your neck. Without pushing your head with your hands, contract your abdominal muscles to lift your right shoulder from the ground and bringing it to your center. Keep the position for 1 or 2 seconds and bring your right shoulder back to the ground. Do 2 series of 10 repetitions and then switch to the left shoulder.



Raise your knees and feet so they create a 90-degree angle. Contract your abdominals and exhale as you lift your hips off the floor with control; your knees will move toward your head. Try to keep your knees at a right angle. Inhale and slowly lower. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Note: We advise that you consult with a health care practitioner before beginning any new exercise program.

Proper Position Throughout Exercise:

- Keep a grape-sized space in your lower back behind the belly button.
- Keep pelvic bone and hip bones level (not in a pelvic tilt).
- Pull belly button in and down towards spine (engages transverse abdominus).
- Keep ribcage tucked in.

Sources: www.mayoclinic.com, www.sportsmd.com, www.optp.com