

FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50+



"The Core"

Editors Note

This newsletter is a condensed version of an Article that has been recently published on Forever Active's web site titled "The Core and Optimal Core Training".

Core training is something that we hear a lot about but most people don't realize what the core is or how significant it is to our over all physical health. It is hoped that this newsletter will help answer some of your questions with regards to core training and that it will spur your interest so you will read the very detailed article on WWW.FOREVER-ACTIVE.COM for a more in-depth understanding of what should be a vital and regular component of your exercise routine.

Your comments and feedback are always welcomed.

What Makes "The Core so Important"

Definition

"The Core" encompasses the **deep & superficial** muscles that stabilize, align & move the trunk of the body. The primary muscles are the abdominals & those of the back . However, the hip flexors, the deep spine stabilizer (iliopsoas), hip extensors & abductors (buttocks muscles), groins & the small deep pelvic floor muscular & diaphragm are all important & should be included when you want to exercise the core.



Importance

A strong core is necessary for ;

1. **Good Posture** - which helps prevents back pain & improves balance which is necessary to protect against falling.
2. **Stabilizes the spine and trunk** - so you can perform the activities of daily living, such as lifting, climbing stairs, getting in & out of chairs more effectively. For the older adult, a strong core delays onset of functional disability.
3. **Enhances your self esteem**– You feel better about yourself if your posture is good & you are able to stand up straighter, & be more physically active & functional.

Strengthening the Core

Core exercises must go beyond the surface muscles that we are most familiar with . They must exercise the deep internal muscles that maintain spinal and pelvic stability during functional movements. As a consequence, to strengthen the core, you have to perform exercises that address a lot of muscles that work differently yet in concert with each other. It won't do to just focus on the abdominal muscles. Exercises that challenge our stability as we bend and move and make all the core muscles work together to stabilize the spine and maintain balance are the top choices for core exercises.

DID YOU KNOW

The Core Muscle Strength & Stability Test

Before you start any exercise routine it is always a good idea to have a base line evaluation of your level of fitness. This is also holds true for your core. By knowing your level of core fitness you can better determine the level of difficulty that you can perform the various core exercises and monitor the development and improvements in your core strength and endurance over time.

Conducting the Test

1. Start **Plank Exercise Position (elbows on the ground)**
Hold for 60 seconds
2. Lift your **right arm off the ground**
Hold for 15 seconds
3. Lift the **left arm off the ground**
Hold for 15 seconds
4. Lift the **right leg off the ground**
Hold for 15 seconds
5. Lift the **left leg off the ground**
Hold for 15 seconds
6. Lift your **left leg and right arm off the ground**
Hold for 15 seconds
7. Lift your **right leg and left arm off the ground**
Hold for 15 seconds
8. Return to the **Plank Exercise Position (elbows on the ground)**
Hold this position for 30 seconds

Evaluation of your Performance

Good Core Strength

If you can complete the test fully, you have good core strength.

Poor Core Strength

If you cannot complete the test fully, your core strength needs improvement.

By comparing your results over time, you will note improvements or declines in core strength.

Essential Core Exercises

Simple and easy way to strengthen your Core

Before You Start

1. Excellent form and technique is required.
2. Strength is important, but equally so are stability, balance and integrative function.
3. Small slow movements that truly engage the deep muscular of the spine and pelvis.
4. Abdominal bracing is a basic technique used during core exercise training. To correctly brace, you should attempt to pull your navel back in toward your spine. You should be able to breathe evenly while bracing. Do not hold your breath.
5. The longer you hold each exercise and the longer you take to complete each repetition, the more you get out of each exercise.
6. Core exercises may be done daily.

Please visit WWW.FOREVER-ACTIVE.COM for a complete list and illustration of essential core exercises.

Essential Core Exercises

1. Standard Planks

- Lie down on your stomach.
- Lift your body off the floor with your forearms (elbows at 90° degrees).
- Keep your body in a straight position (without arching your back) and hold for 10 seconds to one minute.



For beginners you may do the planks (hold position) on your knees rather than on your toes.



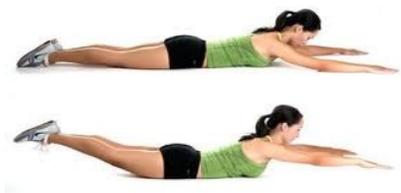
2. The Bird

- Begin in standard plank position and lift one arm out in front of body extend and opposite leg.
- Hold for 5 to 10 sec and then do with opposite arm and leg to complete one set.
- Do 5 sets and progress to 10 sets.



3. Superman

- Lie face down, legs together and extended straight and arms extended to the front
- Slowly lift the upper and lower body (shoulders, chest and legs) off of the ground.
- Hold for 5 to 10 seconds at highest position. Repeat 5 times and progress to 10 rep or more.
- This is a very small movement-- don't move further than you can naturally and easily. Hips stay on the floor.



4. Standard Abdominal Crunch

- Lie on your back and place your feet on the floor, a wall or in a table top position so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Slowly raise your head and shoulders blades off the floor and hold for 1-2 seconds and then return to the start position and repeat.



Christmas Special

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