



core stability

Core Stability has become a 'buzz phrase' for health practitioners, personal trainers and various instructors. A common mistake seen often among people who partake in 'core' exercises is they progress too fast - usually due to a bored instructor or an impatient client. Progressing too fast can be a dangerous mistake - not only do you increase your chances of wasting your time and money by completing the exercises incorrectly, you also run the risk of injury due to attempting exercises well outside of your capabilities.

Core strengthening is an important and (still) emerging modality. Approach a core stability and/or strengthening program with care and *patience*. **You should never pull up with a sore back or neck from a core workout.** Pain in the stomach & butt is usually acceptable.

A difficult challenge when beginning a Core stability program is to actually obtain the correct contraction and posture. Here are some simple guidelines to help you get started:

1. Make a triangle with your hips and pubic bone.

Lie on your back, look towards the roof with your head not hunching forward or arching back. Knees bent, feet @ shoulder width, toes pointing forward.

Place your fingers on the points of your hips.

Now touch your pubic bone. Mentally link this point with the points of your hips to create a triangle.

When in 'neutral spine', if you had a hot cup of coffee sitting on this triangle, it would not tilt forward or back, but would be flat.



2. Where to palpate the contraction

Place your fingers on your belly button. Move out 1/3 of the distance from your belly button to your hips, and slightly down.

Press in firmly, but without causing pain or discomfort.

Brace your deep abdominals as if you are holding on from going to the toilet'. Continue with this contraction further up your belly to where your fingers are. Keep contracting until your fingers begin to get pushed out by your muscles. It is at the point immediately before your fingers get pushed out that you are holding your strongest 'core' brace. Once your fingers push out, your obliques are beginning to assist.

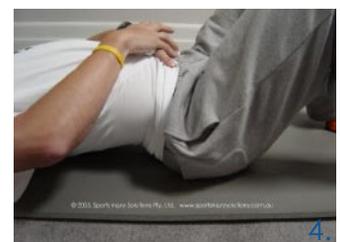


3 & 4. Rocking the pelvis to the end points

With your triangle flat, and your core contraction on (softly to begin with), rock your pelvis back so that your back flattens. This is point '10' (pic 3).

Now rock forward so that your lower back is arched. This is point '0' (pic 4).

*Breathe out as you rock back, and in as you rock forward.



5. Neutral Spine

Once you can find '0' and '10', rock slowly back and forth until you can settle around '6' or '7' (slight arch, not too curved).

This is another way of finding 'neutral spine' and is a valuable approach to take for seated and standing exercises when it is harder to imagine hot coffee on your triangle!



Be Patient: Progressing past the exercises on this page can take some people several weeks! Initial core exercises should be supervised by an experienced practitioner, and should not be painful.