
Core stability for beginners

Notes: You should not feel any pain during or after doing these exercises. It is all about the control so make sure that you do them SLOWLY and that your back stays flat on the floor. Remember, you can consult me via Skype if you need a bespoke programme.

1- Cat/Camel



Start on all fours with your back straight, hands under the shoulders and knees under the hips.

Imagine you have a tail attached to your bottom.

Using your stomach muscles, tuck your tail between your legs and continue the movement with the rest of your spine so that your whole spine is curled up to the ceiling.

Now reverse the movement by sticking your bottom up to the ceiling and curling your spine down to the floor so that you make a hollow in your lower back.

You should initiate the movement from the pelvis and lower back and follow it with the rest of the spine.

Do 10 times

2- Activating the deep core muscles



Aim: Your deep core muscles should contract before the rest of the core. This exercise will teach you how to isolate them.

Research has shown that when you contract the anterior pelvic floor muscles (those are the ones that stops you from urinating and wetting yourself), you also automatically contract the transverse abdominus muscle. Similarly, when you contract the posterior pelvic floor muscles (those are the ones that stops you from farting in public), you automatically activate the multifidus muscles in your back.

So we can use the pelvic floor muscles to activate the rest of the deep core muscles.

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and your lower back in a neutral position.
- Contract your anterior pelvic floor muscles by imagining that you've got a massive wee and you don't want to wet yourself. For men, it's also that sensation when you walk into very cold water and everything down there tries to pull up and away from the cold.
- At the same time contract your posterior pelvic floor muscles by imagining you have wind and you don't want to fart in public. It's not squeezing your bum cheeks or glutes. You should just tense the muscles around your anus without tensing your glutes.
- The key to getting this right is to contract these muscles gently and slowly at first. If you do a quick hard contraction, the other stomach muscles usually kicks in.
- Make sure that your neck and chest is relaxed and that you're not tensing the rest of your body.
- Hold the contraction for 10 sec while breathing normally.
- Repeat at least 10 times and practise this throughout the day in all positions e.g. sitting and standing as well. It can be hard to isolate these muscles at first but practise makes perfect.

3- Start with: Toe taps level 1



Aim: To teach you how to maintain a stable back and pelvis while your legs move freely.

Starting position: Lie on your back with your knees bent. Some people find it useful to place their hands under their lower back so that they can feel if it moves. Use your lower stomach muscle to press your lower back flat onto the floor or your hands. Your chest and neck should be totally relaxed.

Movement: Engage your core by recruiting your pelvic floor and lower stomach muscles. Lift one leg up to 90 degrees hip flexion, keeping the knee bent. Keep your back and pelvis completely still at all times.

Then place the foot back on the floor and repeat with the other side

Check that: Your pelvis does not twist and lower back **DO NOT LIFT** off the floor as you lift and lower your foot. I find it best if you concentrate on making sure that you feel the pressure of your back pushing into your hands, rather than thinking about lifting the leg.

Aim: 2 sets of 10 lifts each side

4- Toe taps level 2



Aim: To teach you how to maintain a stable back and pelvis while your legs move freely.

Starting position: Lie on your back with your knees bent. Some people find it useful to place their hands under their lower back so that they can feel if it moves. Use your lower stomach muscle to press your lower back flat onto the floor or your hands. Your chest and neck should be totally relaxed.

Movement: Engage your core by recruiting your pelvic floor and lower stomach muscles. Lift one leg up to 90 degrees hip flexion, keeping the knee bent. Keep your back and pelvis completely still at all times. Then lift the other leg up to join the first one. Now slowly place your first leg back on the floor followed by the other one.

Repeat, but start with the other leg first.

Check that: Your pelvis does not twist and lower back **DO NOT LIFT** off the floor as you lift and lower your foot. I find it best if you concentrate on making sure that you feel the pressure of your back pushing into your hands, rather than thinking about lifting the legs.

Aim: 2 sets of 10 lifts each side

5- Level 3: Single leg stretch



Aim: To strengthen the core muscles and teach you how to maintain a neutral spine and pelvis while moving your legs.

Starting position: Lie on your back with your knees bent and your lower back flat on the floor.

Movement: Engage your core by recruiting your pelvic floor and stomach muscles. Slowly straighten one leg out while you make sure that **YOUR BACK STAYS ABSOLUTELY FLAT ON THE FLOOR**. Only straighten the leg as far as you can control your back e.g. if you feel your spine lifting off the floor when your knee is half extended, only extend it half way. As you get stronger, you can then straighten your leg out further. Slowly alternate legs.

Check that: Your back stays absolutely flat on the floor throughout the exercise. Do not rush this exercise – it is more difficult to do it slowly.

Do 10 reps, Rest 1 minute, Do 3 sets
Build up to 20reps x3 sets