

Strong to the core

Do you find yourself slumping in chairs? Hunching shoulders?

Many of us live a sedentary life that contributes to poor posture, but developing your core muscles may improve your balance, increase your stability, help protect your spine and even prevent pain.

Almost anyone at any fitness level can work their core, and feel stronger and healthier to move throughout the day.*

Core muscles improve balance, increase stability, help protect the spine and may even prevent pain.

What is your “core”?

The core, also called the “powerhouse,” refers to the entire trunk of the body – front and back – from the upper abdomen down to the pelvis and hips, including the back and side body muscles (lats and obliques).

The core is responsible for supporting the entire body. As you move your arms and legs, bend, twist and turn, you’re depending on your core muscles much more than you likely realize.

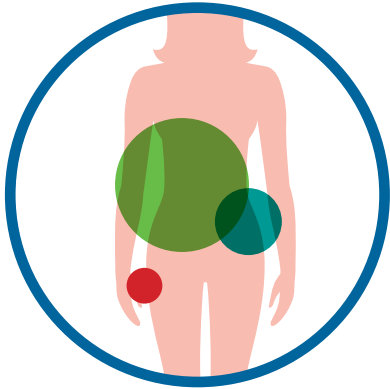
*Talk with your doctor before significantly increasing your activity level. Ask about the amounts and types of activities that may be best for you.



Get started!

With just a few simple exercises each day, you can strengthen your core muscles. Start slow and build up your repetitions. An exercise should challenge you without causing pain.*

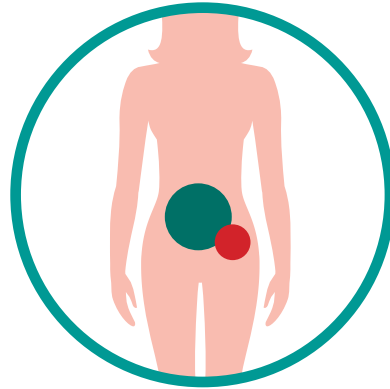
No gym or special equipment needed; mat optional.



CURL UP

This tried-and-true exercise engages your entire core, with special work for your upper abdominal muscles.

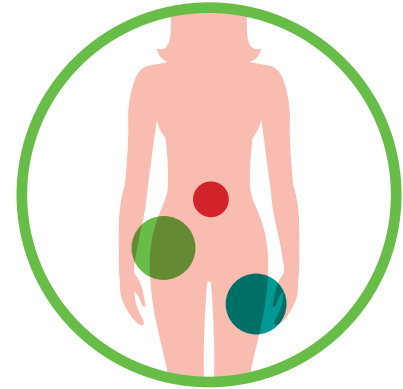
- 1 Lie down on your back with bent knees and feet even and flat on the floor, hip-distance apart.
IMPORTANT: Keep the natural curvature of your spine; don't imprint your lower back into the floor or arch your back.
- 2 Put your arms behind your ears or across your chest; keep your chest open with your shoulders away from your ears.
- 3 Breathe in to prepare; exhale while rolling up with your chest (head and neck follow), leading from your sternum or heart (upper abs); do not strain your head or neck.
- 4 Roll down and repeat.



PELVIC TILT

The pelvic tilt requires such a small movement such that you may not feel like you're even exercising! Still, begin slowly with few repetitions.

- 1 Lie down on your back with bent knees and feet even and flat on the floor, hip-distance apart.
IMPORTANT: Keep the natural curvature of your spine; don't imprint your lower back into the floor or arch your back.
- 2 Flatten your back against the floor by tightening your abdominal muscles and bending your pelvis up slightly and hold for 10 seconds.
- 3 Return to a neutral position and repeat.



BRIDGING

This movement challenges the back of your legs (hamstrings), your core and your gluteus maximus.

- 1 Lie down on your back with bent knees and feet even and flat on the floor, hip-distance apart.
- 2 Exhale and press your heels into the floor to lift your pelvis, moving your knees away from your face as your pelvis rises (making a straight line with your upper body).
- 3 Inhale at the top and exhale as you bridge down, tapping your tailbone on the ground to repeat.

Begin bridging gently, building up to 6-8 repetitions. Take care not to put any pressure on your neck.