



CORE CONCEPTS

Is your core activated well enough to support your back?

CORE MUSCLES = SPINAL STABILITY

**Deep Core
Muscles/Local
Stabilizers: Directly
attached to the spine**



**Superficial Core
Muscles/Global
Stabilizers: Additional
spinal control**

A strong balance between deep and superficial muscle groups is essential in providing support for your spine so that joints, discs and ligaments are not put under excessive strain. These muscles include your abdominal muscles on the front (rectus abdominis) and side of your body (obliques) and muscles in your back alongside your spine and between the bones of your spine. Did you know that your diaphragm, pelvic floor muscles, hip flexors and gluteal muscles also form part of your core?

A combination of general exercise and core training/trunk balance exercises can be very helpful in reducing disability caused by back pain. Core strengthening is more than just working on your six-pack!

***Try these exercises to help you strengthen your core:**

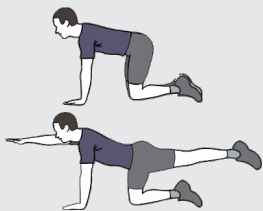
1. BRIDGING



HOW TO DO IT: Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet positioned flat on the floor with your arms positioned beside your torso.

- Use your heels to push into the floor while you lift your pelvis off the floor until your upper body and thighs are positioned in a straight line.
- Hold this position for 2 to 3 seconds and return slowly to the starting position.
- Aim for 10 repetitions.

2. BIRD DOG



HOW TO DO IT: Start on your hands and knees with your hands positioned under your shoulders and knees positioned under your hips.

- Raise your left arm and reach it forwards until it is aligned with your torso; at the same time, kick your right leg backwards until it is aligned with your torso.
- Hold this position for 2-3 seconds before slowly returning to the starting position.
- Alternate sides for 10 repetitions.

3. DEAD BUG



HOW TO DO IT: Lie on your back with both arms extended towards the ceiling.

- Bring your hips, knees, and feet to 90 degrees.
- Flatten your back onto the floor by rotating your pelvis upwards and squeezing your gluteal muscles (this is the starting position for this exercise that you need to hold throughout the movement).
- Extend your left leg to just above the floor (do not let your lower back arch); at the same time, lower your right arm above your head to just above the floor.
- Keep your abdominal and gluteal muscles tightened and return to the starting position.
- Alternate sides for 10 repetitions.

**These exercises serve as a guideline only and should not be performed if it causes or aggravates pain. Contact Christiaan Moolman Physiotherapy Inc. for advice on pain management and individualized treatment plans.*