

CORE STABILITY By Kris Desotelle, PTA

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As spring time approaches, many of us tend to become more active after a long cold winter. Perhaps starting or resuming an exercise routine or outdoor activity such as biking, walking, golfing, or just tackling outdoor projects such as yard work or preparing a garden is what you have in mind. Whatever activity you choose, core stability is the center of all the motions for these activities.

Your core is the trunk muscles of your body and having core stability means these muscles are strong and able to support the rest of your muscles as you move. A stable core improves your balance and helps prevent injury when you make sudden movements or motions you are not used to.

Inner Core Muscles include diaphragm (breathing), transverse abdominis (deep belly), multifidus (along the spine), and pelvic floor (holds urine in).

Back outer core muscles are layered over the deeper muscles of the inner core and are the latissimus dorsi (back and side flanks), and gluteus maximus (buttock).

Front outer core muscles are also layered over the deeper inner core muscles and include the oblique abdominals (sides of belly) and the hip adductors (inner thigh).

Outer core muscles of the hips are the hip abductors (side of hips) and also hip adductors (inner thigh).

Your core muscles work together to help stabilize your spine and hips to create a strong foundation for movement of your body and to protect you from injury.

Strengthening these muscles can be done in a relatively short amount of time, only 10-15 minutes per day and are easy to learn. Core stability benefits include: improved posture, strength and balance, along with less chance of injury and decreased low back pain.

One of the easiest yet most effective core exercises is transverse abdominis (belly) activation. Simply draw your belly button in towards your spine a fraction of an inch and feel the deep inner core muscles tighten. It is small and deep, but don't hold your breath. Hold for 6-10 seconds while breathing normally. Relax and repeat 10 times. This exercise can be done anywhere and in any position; standing, sitting, walking and lying down.

Core stability exercises are easy to learn and do not require any fancy or expensive equipment. Quality is more important than quantity, so it's a good idea to have a physical therapist check to be sure you learn to use the right muscles and breathe normally while you do the exercises.

If you would like to learn more about how to get started on strengthening your core muscles, call Kris Desotelle, PTA at 715-276-1767. Good Health and Happy Spring from Orthopedic & Spine Therapy of Lakewood.

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