Advanced Core Stabilization

ADVANCED DOES NOT MEAN MORE SPINAL MOTION

These progressions increase the challenge through longer levers, a smaller base of support, limb movement, or transitions.

The goal remains the same: maintain a quiet, controlled trunk while breathing normally.

ARE YOU READY TO PROGRESS?

Use the following criteria to determine if you are ready to progress to the advanced routine.

- ☐ The basic version is comfortable and symptom-free.
- ☐ You can keep neutral alignment for every repetition.
- ☐ You can breathe during each 6-10 second hold.
- ☐ You finish the set before shaking or form loss.

PROGRESS ONE VARIABLE AT A TIME

- First: improve control and consistency.
- Then: lengthen the level or reduce support.
- Next: add a slow limb movement or transition
- Only then: add reps, sets, or resistance.

STOP OR STEP BACK IF…

Symptoms spread - Pain, tingling, or numbness travels farther down an arm or leg.

Form changes - The back arches, twists, sags, or the breath is held.

Recovery worsens - Symptoms remain noticeably aggravated after the session.

USE THE ABDOMINAL BRACE

1. Stand, sit or lie in a comfortable neutral position.
2. Gently stiffen the trunk as if preparing for a cough or light poke.
3. Do not pull the belly button inward. Keep the rib cage and pelvis quiet.
4. Breathe normally while maintaining the same gentle tension.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Sacrificing quality of movement for quantity is a good way to cause injury.
- The spine should be neutral during these movements.
- Maintain normal breathing (avoid holding breath).
- Use Abdominal Brace (see front of sheet) to keep spine reasonably stiff.
- Muscle endurance, not strength, has been shown to be most protective against future back troubles.

This practical, spine-sparing approach to core stability is inspired by the work of Stuart McGill and his Big 3 protocol. It has been designed to stabilize the core while minimizing forces on the lower back in order to decrease the risk of injury.

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PATIENT HOME-CARE GUIDE

Core Stabilization (Advanced)

The McGill "Big 3"

Always warm up using Cat-Camel before performing core exercises. Movements should be performed slowly with good form for motor control training and injury prevention. **Perform daily or 2x daily.**

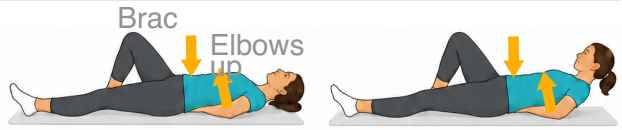
Start with 1 set of 6-8 reps. Progress to 1 set of 15 reps, then to a 2nd set of 12 reps and a 3rd set of 8 reps.

1 MODIFIED CURL-UP: ADD CONTROL, NOT HEIGHT

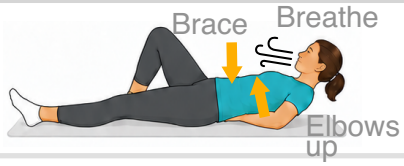
Level 1 - Start in basic curl up position. Lift elbows just off the floor and perform a curl up. Hold, return to starting position, and repeat as recommended.



Level 2 - Start in basic curl up position. Lift elbows just off the floor and brace the entire abdomen, perform a curl up. Hold, return to starting position, and repeat as recommended.



Level 3 - While holding the curl-up position with elbows off floor and abdomen contracted, take deep breaths in and out without breaking form. Return to starting position and repeat.



2 BIRD DOG: HOVER SWEEP OR TRACE A SQUARE



- Start on hands and knees. Brace, then reach one arm forward and the opposite leg back. Keep the trunk still and pelvis level.
- Instead of resting the hand and knee on the floor between reps, "sweep" the hand and knee close to the floor without resting or shifting weight. Think of it like bringing your elbow toward the opposite knee.
- Return to raised position and repeat for total number of reps. Repeat with opposite arm and leg.



- When arm and leg are extended, trace a square pattern with both limbs simultaneously while holding the position for 8-10 seconds.

3 SIDE BRIDGE: ROLLING BRIDGE



Roll from a side bridge through a front plank to the opposite side as one rigid unit. Each controlled roll counts as one rep.



TOP LEG LIFT - Raise and lower the top leg without losing pelvic alignment.



CONTROLLED MARCH - Bend the top knee forward, then return without sagging or twisting.



STRAIGHT ARM - Support on the hand with wrist under shoulder; keep a long body line.

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