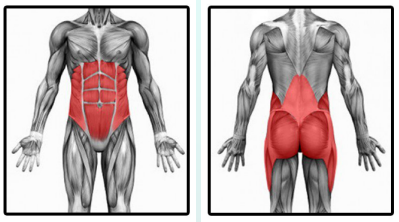
PATIENT HOME-CARE GUIDE

Core Stability & Spine Endurance

WHAT IS THE CORE?

Your core is a 360° system - not just the abdominal muscles.

Muscles around the abdomen, back, pelvis, and hips work together to create enough stiffness for daily tasks. The core is where the body's center of gravity is located and is the root source of all body movement. The core helps the trunk transfer force, guide movement, and resist unwanted motion while you lift, carry, walk, work, and exercise.



WHY TRAIN STABILITY

- Build endurance for daily tasks.
- Control motion instead of repeatedly bending the spine under load.
- Share load across the trunk and hips.
- Improve movement quality before adding resistance or complexity.

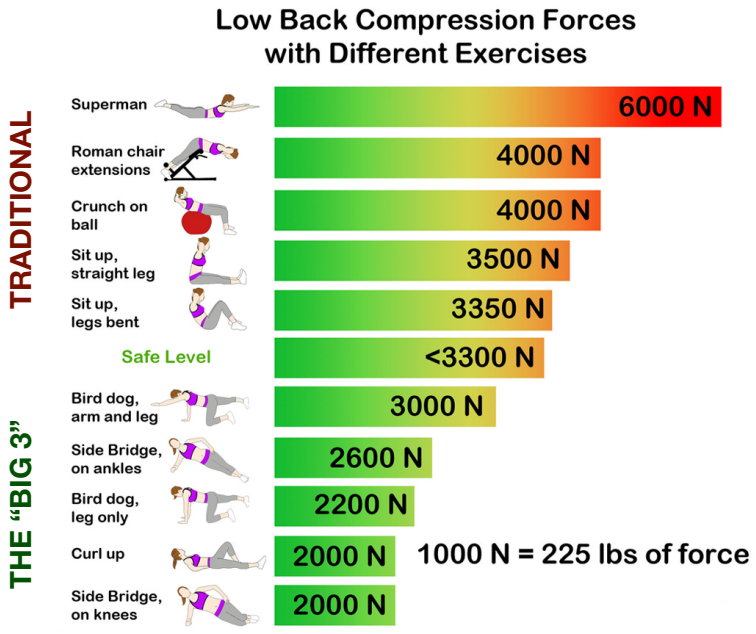
THE GOAL: "JUST ENOUGH" STIFFNESS

Core training is not about holding your breath or squeezing as hard as possible.

It's about creating enough tension to keep the spine controlled, then keep breathing. Greater effort is not automatically better.

WHY NOT TRADITIONAL CORE ROUTINES?

Traditional core exercises put a lot of compression force on the spine, increasing the risk of injury.



THE BIG 3 PRINCIPLES

Neutral Spine - Keep the trunk quiet while the arms or legs move

Short, crisp holds - Use brief holds and stop before shaking or form loss.

Steady breathing - Never trade breath-holding for a longer repetition

LEARN 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.

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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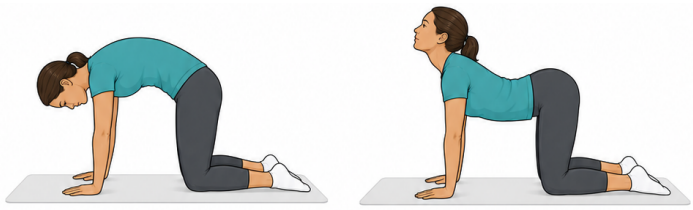
Core Stabilization (Basic)

The McGill "Big 3"

Always warm up before performing core exercises. Movements should be performed slowly with good form for motor control training and injury prevention. **Perform daily or twice daily to improve motor control.**

W CAT-CAMEL WARM-UP

- Start on hands and knees. Slowly round the back, the gently move the other way.
- This is a relaxed motion exercise - not and end-range stretch.
- Move only through a comfortable range.



5-8 slow cycles before moving on

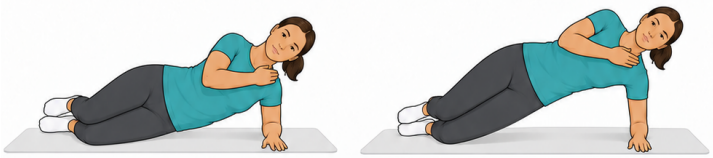
1 MODIFIED CURL-UP



- Lie with one knee bent and the other leg straight. Place both hands under the natural low-back curve. Brace, then lift the head and shoulder blades slightly as one unit.
- Keep the neck neutral; do not crunch.

Hold 6-10 seconds while breathing

2 SIDE BRIDGE

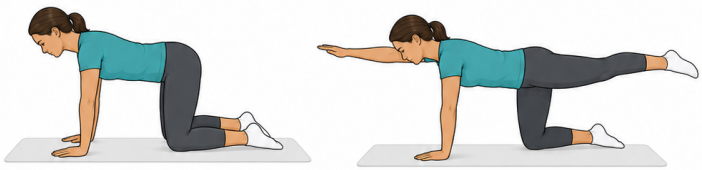


- Lie on your side with knees bent and elbows under the shoulder. Brace and lift the hips until shoulder, hip, and knee form one line. Repeat on both sides.
- Keep hips forward - do not sag or twist.

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

3 BIRD DOG

- Start on hands and knees. Brace, then reach one arm forward and the opposite leg back. Keep the trunk still and pelvis level. Return with control and switch sides.
- Reach long rather than high; stop when alignment or breathing changes.



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

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.

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