

A Chiropractor's Guide to Core Strength



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What is Core Strength?

Your body has 29 Core muscles located mostly in your back, abdomen and pelvis. This group of muscles provide the foundation for movement throughout your body.

Strengthening your Core can help protect and support your back, as well as reducing the risk of injury, giving you greater balance and stability. Core strength can also help improve continence and makes everyday tasks such as reaching and bending far easier.

Regular Core exercise and a balanced diet will also help to change the shape and appearance of your tummy, helping to flatten it as the muscles become stronger and more defined.

Do you suffer from back pain or stiffness? Improving your Core strength is vital to help reduce back complaints.

As is the case with any worthwhile exercise benefit, don't expect an overnight cure. The body takes a little time to adapt but if you persevere, you'll reap the rewards of a strong and healthy Core. Remember its just 10 minutes each day!

How to Improve Core Strength

The best way to get the most improvement in your Core strength is through a series of specific but regular exercises. You don't need any specialist equipment and you won't need to join a gym. You should exercise daily and when you understand the movements the set of exercises will only take 10 minutes each day. We're only talking around 1 hour each week!

Everybody has different levels of fitness and strength so it's good to respect your own current limitations and starting point. The important thing is to take the first step.

Once you've started, keep focused on smooth movements, how the exercises feel and breathe properly. You'll soon start to notice improvements.

Core Strength Muscles

The muscles which make up the core are those muscles which attach to the spine or pelvis. The main muscle groups involved are;

Stomach

1. The abdominals
 - Rectus abdominis
 - Transverse abdominis

Sides

2. Internal and external obliques

Pelvis

3. Iliacus
4. Psoas

Back

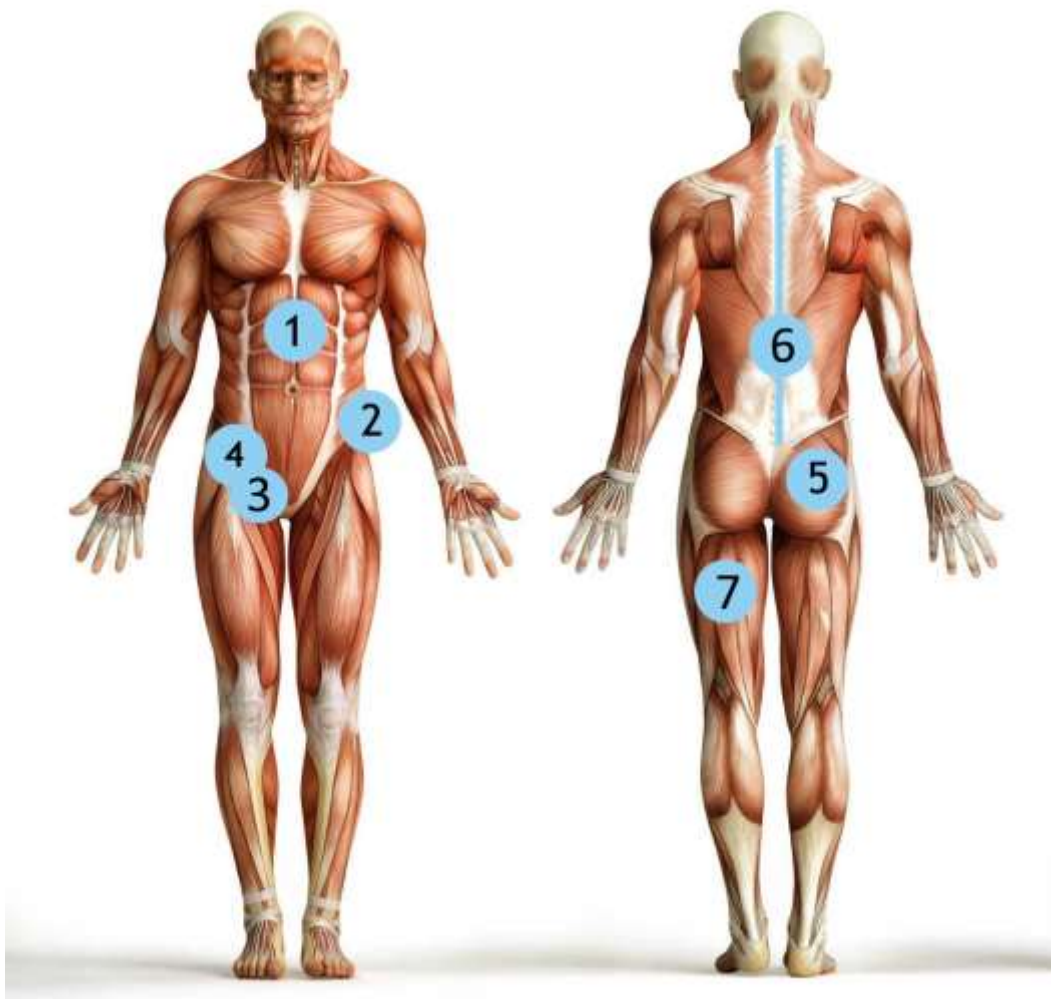
5. Erector spinae

Bottom

6. Gluteals

Legs

7. Hamstrings



6 Weeks to a Strong Core

Begin slowly and build on each exercise progressively until they become easier, working up to three sets of each exercise. Start at 5 reps and increase to 15 over time. Plank exercises should be held in the contracted position for 15 seconds initially and build to 1 minute holds. Stop if you feel any pain or discomfort. We recommend that you consult a health professional &/or your GP before undertaking an increase in exercise or diet changes.

Your 6 Week Schedule

Week 1 - 1 set of 5 reps
Week 3 - 2 sets of 10 reps
Week 5 - 2 sets of 15 reps

Week 2 - 2 sets of 5 reps
Week 4 - 3 sets of 10 reps
Week 6 - 3 sets of 15 reps

1. Dead Bug



Begin lying on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Raise both arms above head pointing towards ceiling.



Activate core. Lift one foot off floor until knee is directly above hip, keeping arms raised. Pause momentarily. Return to start position.

2. Bird Dog



Begin on your hands and knees with your head and back in a straight position. Hands should be under your shoulders, hips directly above knees.



Activate core muscles. Raise one arm to shoulder level as opposite leg simultaneously lifts off floor, extending to hip height. Pause momentarily. Return to start position and alternate sides. Maintain a straight spine position, not allowing your hips to twist or rotate. Do not hyper-extend low back when extending leg.

3. Gluteal Bridge



Begin on the floor, facing up, in bridge position. Bend knees with heels firmly on floor with toes up and arms extended to sides. Lift hips so that knees, hips, and shoulders are aligned.



Slowly lift one foot off the ground maintaining a 90 degree knee bend and flex hip to 90 degrees. Pause momentarily before lowering leg to starting position.

4. Mountain Climber



Begin in high plank position with hands and toes on the floor. Arms should be positioned directly under shoulders.



Lift left knee to towards chest maintaining plank position, then return to starting position. Repeat with the other leg.

5. Side Bridge



Begin on your side with knees bent or legs straight. Place support forearm directly under shoulder.



Activate core muscles. Lift hips off floor and attain a straight, rigid position from thighs through your upper body. Once in this position, there should be no movement. Maintain core contraction. Hold for recommended duration. Perform on opposite side.

We hope that you find these Core Strength Exercises beneficial. We recommend completing these exercises once each day in the order shown. Always warm up before you exercise and do so without pain.

As qualified Chiropractors we recommend that you consider having your spine checked to help relieve tension and imbalance that can lead to pain and discomfort. Maintaining Core strength is an important component of health but correcting the underlying postural problems with Chiropractic care and specifically prescribed rehabilitation exercises is yet a more effective way to keep your spine healthy for the future.

Should you have any questions about this guide or your wider spinal health please don't hesitate to call my clinic team who are ready to help.

For more details please call (01903) 66 00 94.

Alexandra Elphick (Chiropractor) & Team at Beach House Chiropractic

Please seek prompt medical advice should you feel any exacerbation in any medical condition you have. Please speak with your Chiropractor, GP or health practitioner if you have any questions about this guide.