

MOVE IT! MONDAY

Best Exercises For Core Strength

To build a strong core you need to exercise a variety of muscles, from your hips to your shoulders. The abdominal muscles are a very small part of the core. The abs have very limited and specific action, and what experts refer to as the "core" actually consists of different muscles that stabilize the spine and pelvis, and run the entire length of the torso.

The core muscles also make it possible to stand upright and move on two feet. These muscles help control movements, transfer energy, shift body weight, and move in any direction. A strong core distributes the stresses of weight-bearing and protects the back. Core conditioning exercise programs need to target all these muscle groups to be effective.



Quick Core Workout

The Plank: Hold position for 15 - 60 seconds



Side Plank: Begin in the pictured position and keep your body stiff from head to toe. Hold the position 15-60 seconds while maintaining control, and be sure to do both sides!



Bridge Exercise: Hold the position pictured above for 15-60 seconds while maintaining control. If you do the single leg bridge as well, be sure to do both sides!

V-Sit Abdominal Exercise: To do the V-sit, start in a seated position on the floor, contract your abdominal muscles and core, and lift your legs up to a 45-degree angle as pictured. Reach your arms straight forward or reach up toward your shins as you are able. Maintain good core posture and a strong spine while you hold the position for several seconds. Rest and repeat several



Bicycle Crunch: To do the exercise, lay flat on the floor with your lower back pressed to the ground. Rest your hands behind your head without pulling on your neck. Bring your knees up to about a 45-degree angle and slowly go through a bicycle pedal motion as pictured. First, touch your left elbow to your right knee, then your right elbow to your left knee. Perform the exercise in a slow, controlled motion. Repeat 10-25 repetitions on each side.

Skip with Twist: Begin by slowly skipping forward 10 strides (5 per side), stop and turn around.

For each return skip, gradually add more intensity and a larger twist to your strides.