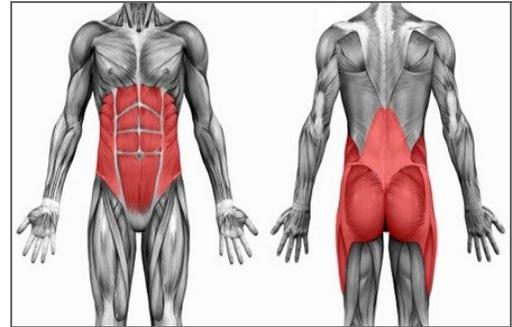


# Benefits of a Stronger Core

## What exactly is core strength?

Core strength is about more than just that “six pack” we hear about. Core strength is about the muscles that surround our torso. These muscles are important for full body stability because they act as a “girdle” for stability and better balance. A strong core can also improve posture and increase our bone density. The main muscles of the core include the abdominals, obliques and lower back.



## What can a strong core do for me?

- **Improve your balance and stability:** Core exercises target the muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and stomach to promote coordinated movement leading to better core stability and overall balance.
- **A stronger core can help make daily activities easier to do:** Having the ability to bend, reach, twist and lift are all essential to living independently. Having a stronger core will enable you to do more throughout your day with less pain and fewer injuries.
- **Improve your posture:** A strong core improves your posture and increases the bone density of your spine which decreases lower back pain and susceptibility to muscle injuries.
- **We rely on core strength for everyday movements:** A strong core helps to support the weight of our upper body on our lower spine (or back). Strong core muscles help distribute that weight evenly throughout daily movements.
- **Remember to go slow:** You don't need to do hours of core exercises. Do a couple exercises slowly and make sure to really focus on the muscles you are working. If you feel some soreness in your stomach or lower back area the next day, take a break and try doing more core exercises the following day.

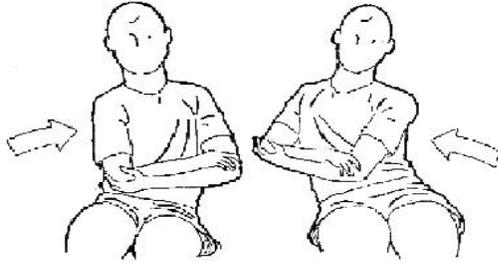
**Make sure to consult a health care professional before starting any new form of physical activity.**



Forever...  
*in motion*  
Physical Activity - do it for life!

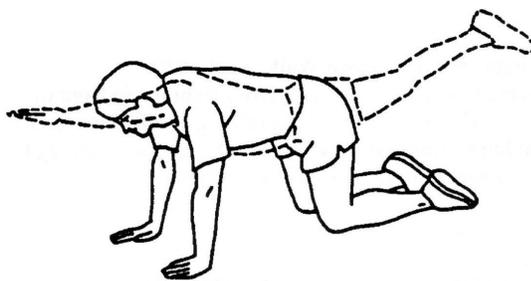
# Core Exercises You Can Do At Home

## 1. Right/Left Lean (obliques)



Place arms in cradle position in front of you. Shift weight to the right side, squeeze your left hip and ribs together then release and return to middle. Repeat 10-12 times. Switch and repeat on other side, shifting weight to the left and squeezing together on the right.

## 2. Arm & Leg Lifts: (abdominals and lower back)



On hands and knees, slowly straighten and extend your left leg. At the same time, lift and extend your right arm while pulling your belly button towards your spine. Slowly, return to start position, and switch to right leg and left arm. Alternate 10-12 times each side while alternating sides. For an easier level just do one arm or leg at a time.

## 3. Leaning Back on a Chair (abdominals)



Move to the edge of your chair. For  
Level 1: Place your hands on your thighs  
Level 2: Hands crossed over your chest  
Level 3: Hands lightly behind your ears  
Sit up and pull your belly button into your spine as though you are trying to zip up a pair of pants. Lean back from the hips, while maintaining your posture. Keep your chin horizontal to the ground and do not lay back into the chair. Return to starting position. Repeat 10-12 times.

**For more information and resources  
for older adults, contact  
Forever...in motion at  
(306)655-2286 or (306)655-2285.**



### References

1. Core Exercises: 7 Reasons to Strengthen Your Core Muscles (2009). *Mayo Clinic*. Retrieved August 5, 2010 from: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/core-exercises/SM00071/NSECTIONGROUP=2>