

PRACTICAL AND EASY WAYS TO BUILD CORE STRENGTH

24 CORE EXERCISES TO START BUILDING
YOUR STRENGTH AND RESILIENCY TODAY!



REVISION HEALTH SERVICES



**THANK YOU TO KIM FOR
VOLUNTEERING AND ALLOWING
ME TO CAPTURE THE STRENGTH
OF HER CORE!**

WHAT'S INCLUDED

24 total exercises with dosage and tips from a Doctor of Physical Therapy.

Pictures and descriptions of 8 foundation core exercises. Each with detailed descriptions ranging from beginner difficulty to more advanced.

Consider this moving forward,

This PDF is a blend of core strengthening exercises that I have created with the intention of building core strength and overall resiliency. We know that a strong core can not only make your everyday tasks easier but you can have more confidence with movement. Some of these may seem easy and others may seem very difficult.

I want to let you know these were curated from experience and research. I have seen the best results when we blend both.

I have a passion for efficiency. Blending what works well and what works more will allow us to build strength more quickly than just doing more repetitions. Life is busy so let's make sure we are doing what needs to be done but also know we can't spend all day strengthening or working out.

These are safe and effective for many body types and conditions. I have had clients with arthritis, degeneration, disc herniations, and even joint replacements complete these exercises. If you are unsure or apprehensive, it is best to receive a thorough evaluation to ensure form and safety.

Throughout this you will receive a detailed description on form and dosage. That is how to do it and how many. Both of which are important and often specific to each person. The overall goal is to build strength so the dosage will be focused around that.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1 Consistency is key

Even if you only do 2 of these a day that is still better than nothing!

2 Listen to your body

Sore doesn't mean harm but if you haven't done anything like this in a while, expect soreness.

3 Modify if needed

Learning your body and knowing when to push forward and when to pull back is important. If you can't do the full reps that is okay! If you can't

EXERCISE LEVEL INDICATOR

The exercise level indicator below will help you determine the difficulty of each exercise.

Remember these: **GREEN** (beginners), **ORANGE** (intermediate), and **RED** (challenging)



RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

TUBE BANDS OR DUMBBELLS AND SWISS BALL

WEIGHTED AIR SQUAT



Assume a standing position with your feet about shoulder width, toes pointed straight ahead or with slightly pointed out based on what feels natural, while hold a pair of dumbbells at your side, descend into a squat, ideally your trunk should not pitch forward more than 45 degrees and go down into the squat until your thighs are parallel with the floor or until a depth you are comfortable with.

TIP:

Draw attention to your stomach muscles when performing the exercise for increased core muscle activation.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 8 reps

AIR SQUAT



Same mechanics as the previous exercise but performed without weight or resistance. Arms can be placed in front of you as pictured or folded across your chest.

TIP:

Start with a higher squat then go deeper once you feel comfortable.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 12 reps

BRIDGE



Start by lying down flat on your back, with your knees bent at about 90 degrees and feet placed about shoulder width apart, arms placed comfortably at your sides. Pushing through the floor, lift your bottom into the air until your body is in a straight line or as best as you can through a comfortable range of motion.

TIP:

Draw your attention to your low back, glute and leg muscles as you perform this exercise for increased muscle activation.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 12 reps

BRIDGE ON BALL



Begin by lying flat on your back with your feet positioned on an exercise ball, arms placed comfortably at your side. Go ahead and lift your bottom from your floor, aiming to bring your body into a straight line as best as you can.

TIP:

If to make the exercise easier, place the contact point of the ball further up your leg, such as under your calf.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 12-15 reps

BALL HAMSTRING ROLL OUT FULL RANGE OF MOTION



Begin by lying on your back with your feet on an exercise ball with your arms comfortably at your side. Place some pressure into the ball with your legs and pull the ball towards you bending your knees towards your body. Try to bring your knees as far as you comfortably can towards you.

TIP:

You can make the exercise more challenging by performing the exercise with your butt lifted off the ground.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 12 reps

BALL HAMSTRING ROLL OUT LIMITED RANGE OF MOTION



Similar to the previous exercise but work within a smaller range of motion that is either pain-free or within your available range of motion.

TIP:

As you warm up, see if you can go into even greater and greater range of motion, bringing your knees even further toward you with each rep.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 12 reps

LUNGE WITH UNILATERAL HOLD



Begin by standing in an upright position with feet shoulder width apart, hold one dumbbell or weight at either your left or right side and no weight in the other hand. Pick a leg and step forward into a lunge movement lowering the rear knee towards the floor in a controlled manner and then step back. You can perform all reps on one side and then the other or alternate between legs.

TIP: It's okay if your knee goes over your toes slightly.

DOSAGE: 3 sets of 8 reps per leg

LUNGE WITH WEIGHT IN BOTH HANDS



Same as the previous exercise but hold a dumbbell or weight in both hands.

TIP: Common mistake is to lean too far forward when performing this movement. If this is the case, typically that means you need to lower the weight and slowly build up to heavier resistance.

DOSAGE: 3 sets of 8 reps per leg

LUNGE WITH UPPER EXTREMITY ASSIST



For this lunge variation, you will just use body weight and some type of support such as a rod, dowel, counter top, door handle, etc for assistance. Perform the lunge movement as described in the prior lunge exercises while using the upper extremity assistance as needed to complete the movement.

TIP:

As you get stronger, try to go deeper into the lunge. You want to feel the front of your back leg really stretch.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 8 reps per leg

CRUNCH ON SWISS BALL



Begin by lying on your back on an exercise ball, the curve of your back should be supported by the ball as pictured, knees bent about 90 degrees with feet about shoulder width apart on the floor. With hands behind the head for support, perform the movement by placing emphasis on tightening your stomach muscles and lifting or “crunching” your upper body, imagine bringing the bottom of your rib cage towards your hips. Slowly lower back down to the starting position and repeat.

TIP:

If performed correctly, your middle and lower back will not come off of the ball, just your shoulder blades.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 10-20 reps

HIP CIRCLES ON BALL



Sit on an exercise ball with knees bent about 90 degrees, feet placed shoulder width apart. Overemphasize posture on this one by avoiding a slumped position, if you feel “overcorrected” you are probably in a good posture. Place your hands on your hip bones for support. Begin by moving your hips in a circular motion, like you are drawing out a big O with your hips. The goal is for the majority of the motions to come from the hips and butt and not from contortion or movement from the rest of the body.

TIP:

Perform in front of a mirror to observe if you are in a slumped posture or if there is any extraneous movement coming from the rest of the body.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 5-10 reps clockwise and counterclockwise

CRUNCH ON THE SWISS BALL



Begin by lying on a firm surface, knees bent with feet placed about shoulder width apart on the floor. Place hands behind head for support or fold arms in front of your chest if there are any shoulder or arm mobility restrictions. Draw attention to your stomach muscles, perform the movement by bringing your lower ribcage towards your hips and as a consequence your head and shoulder blades will lift off the ground. Lower back down after you have “crunched” as far as you can.

TIP:

If performed correctly, your middle and lower back will not lift off the floor, just your head and shoulder blades.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 10-20 reps

STIR THE POT



Begin in a plank position as pictured on an exercise ball. Place your forearms and elbows on an exercise ball your feet on the floor placed about shoulder width apart. Perform a “stirring” motion with your arms as if you were stirring a big pot, performing controlled circular motions.

TIP:

Start with small circles and as you get more confident, graduate into bigger and bigger circles.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 5-10 reps clockwise and counterclockwise

PLANK ON SWISS BALL



Same starting position as the previous exercise, but this is just a static hold with no movement.

TIP:

Think about tightening your glutes/ butt muscles in addition to your stomach muscles for further muscle activation and strengthening.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 30-60 seconds

PLANK ON CHAIR



Using a chair with padding, couch, sofa or something of that nature, I assume a plank position as pictured with arms straight.

TIP:

As you get stronger, you can graduate to lower and lower surfaces with the ultimate goal of being able to perform a plank from the floor.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 30-60 seconds

ONE ARM CURL IN MINI SQUAT POSITION



Assume a mini-squat position as pictured, knees bent about 45 degrees. Hold a dumbbell or weight in one arm and then you will perform a bicep curl movement while maintaining the squat position. After performing the desired number of reps on one side, you can stand back up, switch arms and then assume the mini squat position again and repeat the prescribed numbers of reps.

TIP: The majority of the movement is coming from your arm, there should be little to no movement from your trunk or legs or the rest of the body. If you feel your body trying to help out with the exercise, try going down to a lower weight.

DOSAGE: 3 sets of 8-12 reps per side

ONE ARMED CURL WITH DUMBBELL



Same as the prior exercise but perform in a standing position and not in a squat position.

TIP: If performed correctly you should not feel your body swaying to help assist the movement, if so, decrease to a lower weight until you feel that your arm is accomplishing the majority of the movement.

DOSAGE: 3 sets fo 12 reps per side

TWO ARM CURL WITH DUMBBELL



Standing upright and face your palms out. Then curl up. Be sure to control the weight on the way down.

TIP:

Be sure not to rock your body backwards as you curl up.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 12 reps

PLANK WITH HIP EXTENSION



Assume a plank position on elbows and forearms on a firm surface. Keeping your legs straight in an extended position, lift one leg into the air while maintaining pressure on the remaining contact points of your elbows and other foot. You can either perform all the reps on one leg and then go onto the other leg or alternate legs, it is personal preference.

TIP:

It is possible to over extend or over lift your leg on this one, more range of motion is not necessarily better if lifting up your leg higher is throwing off your form.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 8 reps per leg

PLANK



Assume a plank position as pictured on elbows and toes, keeping body in a straight line from shoulders to hip to knees to feet.

TIP: Draw emphasis to your stomach and glute muscles for improved stability and muscle activation.

DOSAGE: 3 sets of 30-60 seconds

PLANK ON KNEES



A modification for the standard plank. On a firm surface, position yourself on your elbows and forearms while on your knees with feet in the air.

TIP: You can make this variation easier by positioning your knees closer to your elbows or more challenging by placing your knees even further away from your elbows.

DOSAGE: 3 sets of 30-60 second

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

OPEN BOOK



Begin by lying on either side, both knees bent to about 90 degrees, place your bottom hand on your top thigh for support and using your top arm, reach to the opposite side, opening up as if you were a book. Use the bottom hand to hold down your legs from lifting off the ground as your stretch across your body.

TIP:

As you reach across, it is ok let your spine, trunk head and neck turn to get the most of this stretch.

DOSAGE:

3 sets of 10 reps per side

PIRIFORMIS STRETCH



Begin by lying on your back, cross over one leg into what is called a figure 4 position, placing one foot on top of the opposite knee as pictured. As best as possible, grab behind your leg and pull your knee towards your body. The stretch should generally be felt in the buttock region.

TIP:

If you lack the mobility to confidently grab behind the leg, you can use a towel or belt for assistance.

DOSAGE:

2-3 sets of 30 seconds holds per side

BEAN DROP



When lying on your side, place a pillow between the knees and a pillow under your side. Inhale slowly through your nose feeling your rib cage expand to the front, side and back and pelvic floor dropping towards your feet (imagine dropping kidney beans from anus and/or vagina). Exhale, slowly through your mouth as you would when you are blowing through a straw, feeling your rib cage return inwards and pelvic floor muscles recoil back to starting position. Repeat on both sides and then in a sitting position.

TIP: Just drop the beans, do not lift the beans!

DOSAGE: Perform for approximately 3 minutes on each side and in sitting, 1-2 times per day