

CORE STABILITY

By: Mark Gilligan

You have probably heard of people using “buzz” terms like “core stability” or “core strengthening,” and possibly not known what exactly they are referring to. Referencing the core is referring to the muscles that are deep within the abdominals and back, attaching to the spine or pelvis. Some of these muscles include the transversus abdominis, the muscles of the pelvic floor, and external obliques. These muscles are where movement originates and it is also the source of our stability and power. Whether you're running, lifting weights or navigating through an agility course, these 'core' muscles help keep your body stable and balanced.

The importance of function of the central core for stabilization and force generation in all sports activities is being increasingly recognized. “Core stability” is necessary for efficient biomechanical function to maximize force generation and minimize joint loads. Core training has many benefits including, functional workouts that translate into sport activities and improved performance, reduction in the risk of injury, and it provides a change of pace in your workouts that challenge you in a variety of ways. Core training can also be incorporated regardless of what seasonal phase an athlete may be in.

All core strengthening exercises should begin with a solid abdominal brace, which holds the muscles in a static, but active state. Beginner level core exercises can begin with basic abdominal crunches, bridge ups, and side lying hip lifts. These exercises can be done anywhere, and without additional equipment.

As an individual becomes more proficient with those they can move onto an intermediate program involving various stability ball exercises, such as supine leg curls, back hyperextension, reverse hyper extension, elbow bridge or straight arm roll outs. More advanced activities may include pike roll in and outs and quadruped swimmers. Using the stability ball incorporates a greater degree of difficulty, requiring more balance.

The incorporation of a challenging, yet manageable core stabilization program as an integral facet of your conditioning may be just what you need. For more information and greater understanding of ways to implement these types of exercises into your workout regimen, contact any Southeastern Physical Therapy clinic.