

# Core Strengthening

The core is the center of foundation for all fitness endeavors. It is the epicenter where all movement originates. While many people focus on lower and upper body strengthening and endurance, core strengthening is often negated. Without a stable foundation to build upon you can experience injuries while engaging in other fitness activities. Try to think of the trunk or core as one of the links in the chain. The chain will be only as strong as the weakest link and this is often the core.

The core is comprised of many different muscles within the abdominal, low back, trunk and pelvic area. It helps to stabilize and prevent excessive movement of the pelvis. An unstable pelvis will put unnecessary strain on a number of different structures from muscles and tendons to ligaments and nerves. This unnatural strain will frequently lead to injury anywhere from your feet up to your back and neck. For example, a pelvis that is rotated anteriorly (the front of the pelvis is moved downward and the back of the pelvis is moved up) puts a constant strain on the hamstrings. It also keeps the muscles of the low back in a shortened contracted position. This can often times lead to a hamstring pull, achilles tendonitis, and/or low back pain as well as numerous other maladies. Furthermore, excessive pelvic movement is inefficient and results in wasted energy that may decrease your level of performance.

It is recommended you find a circuit that works for you given the following exercises, and do each exercise for 10-30 seconds (progress as you get stronger) 1-4 circuits, resting 15 seconds between exercises, and 3-5 minutes between circuits, 2-4 times per week.



### Chopping Wood

- Standing straight up, with feet apart just past shoulder width hold a cable in both hands, one hand over top the other. The hand on bottoms is the hand closest to the apparatus.
- Rotate sideways while squatting down at the same time. This movement is done while keeping the arms straight (think of them as an extension of your torso) pulling on the cable down at an angle across the body ending to knee height.
- Reverse the motion, in a slow controlled manner to the starting position.
- This exercise should be done in a continuous motion.
- Repeat until you have completed a set, switch legs and repeat.

### Back Bridge:

Sit on the ball and roll forward, walking outward with your feet, until your body is parallel with the floor.

### Plank:

Position the body in a modified push-up position with elbows and feet on the floor. Elbows directly under the shoulders, body is straight with neck, hips and ankles in alignment. Hold for prescribed time Release and



### Hip Extension – Bridging with Heels:

Lie with hips on the floor, feet flat resting on Bosu ball, lift hips off floor and hold. Raise the hips so body is straight and keep knees tight. Release and repeat entire sequence.

### Farmer's Walk

- Hold a DB in both hands with arms hanging down from your sides.
- The DB can be the same or different weight e.g. 10 and 15lbs, 15 and 25lbs, 5 and 10lbs, etc
- Walk 20-30 feet and switch arm positions if weight is different and repeat.



### Mule Kick w/Arm Extension

- Kneel on all fours with your toes pointed backward with hands and feet shoulder width apart.
- Extend the same leg backwards while simultaneously extending the opposing arm (right arm) out and forward from its shoulder. Hold momentarily then return to the starting position. Repeat until time is complete then switch to other arm and leg. Keep a neutral spine, head, neck hips in alignment. Don't hyper-extend your back.