

5 STARTING EXERCISES FOR A STRONG CORE

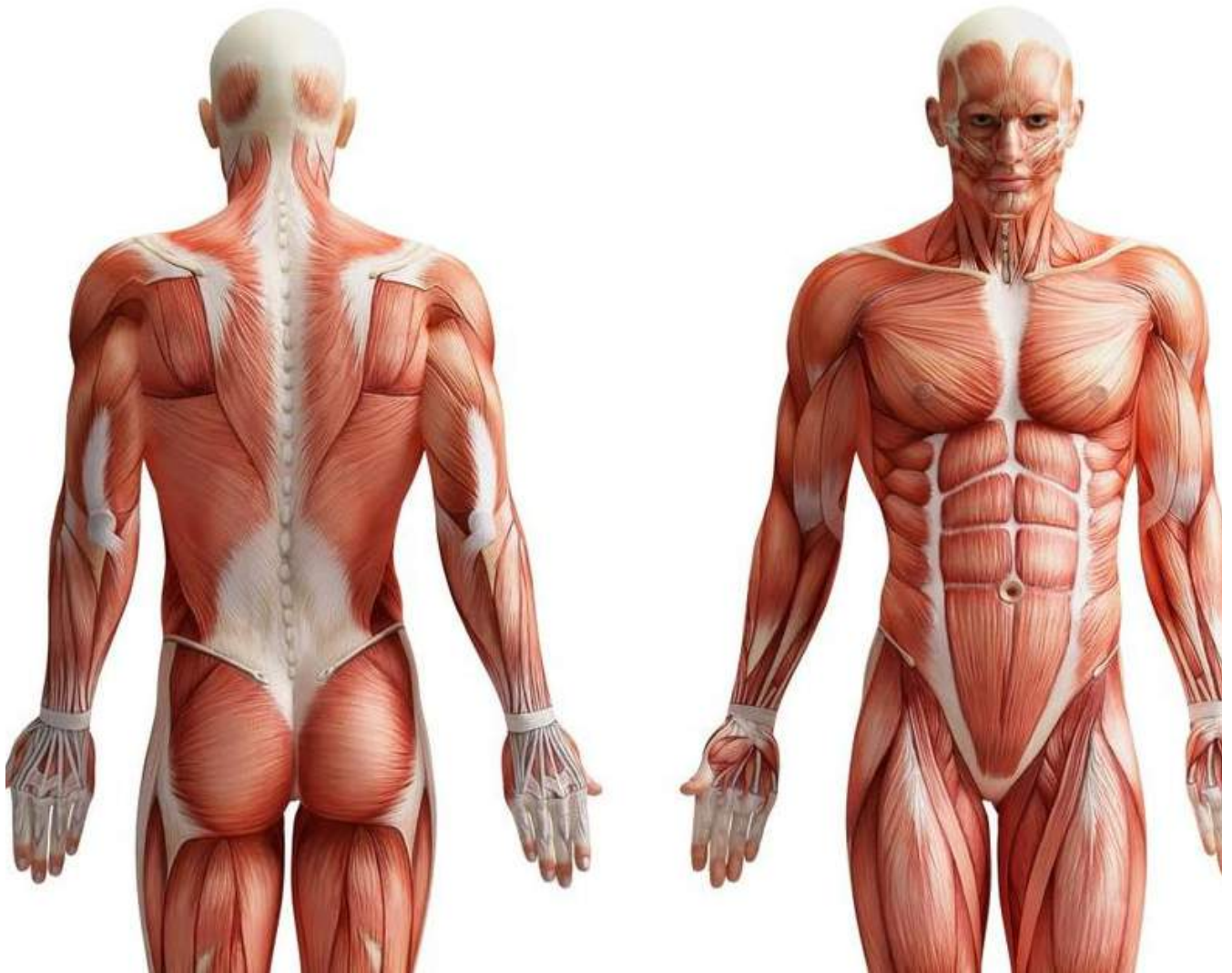


WHAT IS THE CORE

The core is your centre of gravity and where all movement begins. It is also the centre of stability for the lower limb, from the foot to the hip. In order for muscles to move the bones other muscles need to hold on to the bones creating a solid base. Therefore, the muscles in your core function as stabilizers to allow movement.

While there is no fixed definition of the core, it usually refers to the pelvic floor, diaphragm, deep abdominal muscles and the small, deeper back muscles. Some people also simplify the Core muscle by dividing them into four regions; back extensors, abdominals, lateral trunk muscles, and the hip muscles.

However you classify it, those main groups work together in a coordinated fashion to provide us with a well-coordinated trunk that the forces from our limbs can be worked with and also against as needed.



WHY YOU SHOULD STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE

Core exercises are an important part of a well-rounded fitness program. Aside from occasional situps and pushups, however, core exercises are often neglected. Still, it pays to get your core muscles in better shape.

CORE EXERCISES IMPROVE YOUR BALANCE AND STABILITY

Core exercises train the muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen to work in harmony. This leads to better balance and stability, whether on the playing field or in daily activities. In fact, most sports and other physical activities depend on stable core muscles.

CORE EXERCISES DON'T REQUIRE SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT OR A GYM MEMBERSHIP

Any exercise that involves the use of your abdominal and back muscles in a coordinated fashion counts as a core exercise. For example, using free weights in a manner that involves maintaining a stable trunk can train and strengthen several of your muscles, including your core muscles.

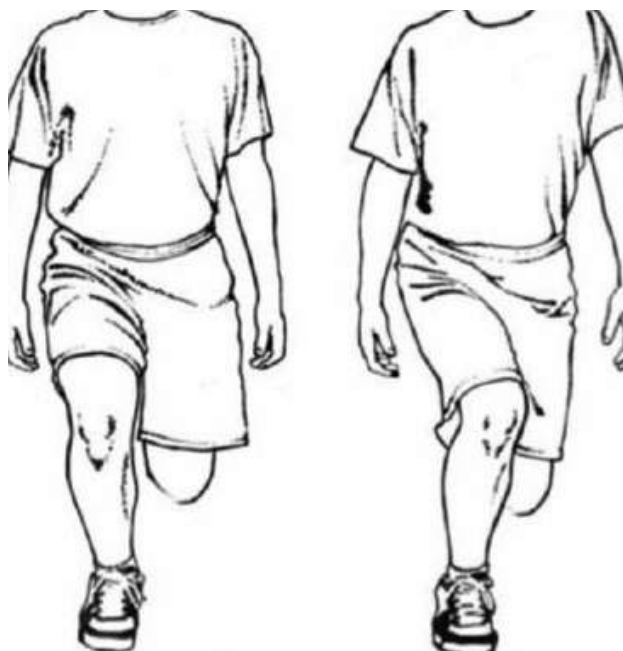
HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE WEAKNESS OF THE CORE MUSCLES?

There are many tests Physios use to evaluate core strength but one of the tests we can use is a simple single leg stance position. It is amazing how both athletes and non athletes can have difficulty standing on one leg for 6 seconds.

The next step is to do a partial squat while attempting to maintain your knee over the foot. Do this in front of a mirror and watch the control of your leg.

As you perform a single leg partial squat do you lose your balance or are unable to maintain your knee over your foot, as the knee moves from side to side during the squat?

To a trained observer we can look at not only your knee control but that of the pelvis, hip and core. Poor knee control can be indicative of poor core control.



OUR TOP FIVE CORE EXERCISES

Keeping your core strong doesn't have to mean joining a gym or spending hours exercising.

These five exercises can easily be incorporated into your daily routine.

PELVIC FLOOR CONTRACTIONS

The pelvic floor sits between the tailbone and the pubic bone, forming the base of the core.

For women, we suggest trying to close the back and front passages together, as if stopping yourself from doing a poo or wee.

For men, try drawing the base of the penis in and the testes up.

It's important not to hold your breath, squeeze your glutes (buttock muscles) or tilt your pelvis.

Aim for 10 repetitions of a 10 second hold, with a 10 second rest between each.

Our Physios can help you with the correct way to engage your pelvic floor.

SINGLE LEG BALANCE AND PARTIAL SQUAT

Standing on one leg requires organising your trunk over your pelvis over your foot, necessitating use of those small, deep muscles. Corrections to maintain balance use muscles in your ankle, hip and spine.

Aim to maintain a level pelvis. Start with holding as long as you can on one leg and progress to a minute. Then you can add a very small single leg squat, building up to 20 or 30 on each leg in sets of 10

A variation for beginners: single-leg squat with chair.

If you're a beginner or if balancing is hard for you, you can do this move with the help of a chair.

Begin seated in a high chair with your torso up and your core engaged. Seated, put your weight in the heel of your standing leg which will stay on the ground. Use your arms to propel you to stand up, balancing on your grounded leg, weight in the heel

Slowly lower yourself back down as if to sit back in the chair.

Perform 5 to 10 reps. Switch legs. Perform up to 3 sets. Maintain a level pelvis and knee over foot.

HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY

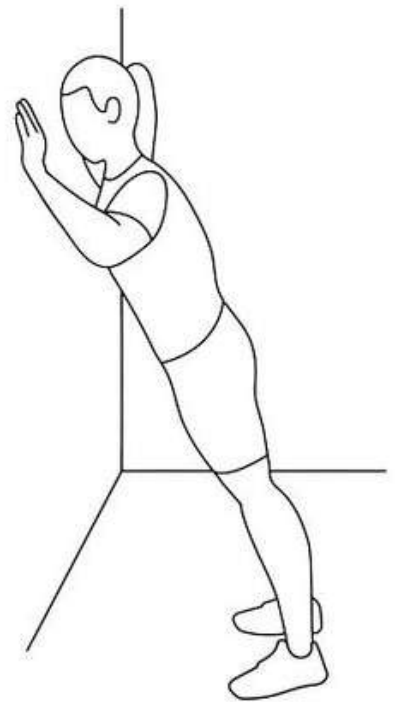
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WALL PUSH-UPS

Place your hands on the wall at chest height with your feet about a foot away from the wall. Draw up your pelvic floor and the lower, deep part of your tummy in. With control, move in and out in a push-up pattern.

Change it up by doing the exercise standing on one leg, which uses the oblique muscles more. Do some with the elbows close to the body to work the triceps (back of the arm), and some with the elbows wider for the pectorals (chest muscles). If you're stronger, you can do these on a desk or bench or go to a full push-up.

Aim to build up for a total of 30 push-ups.

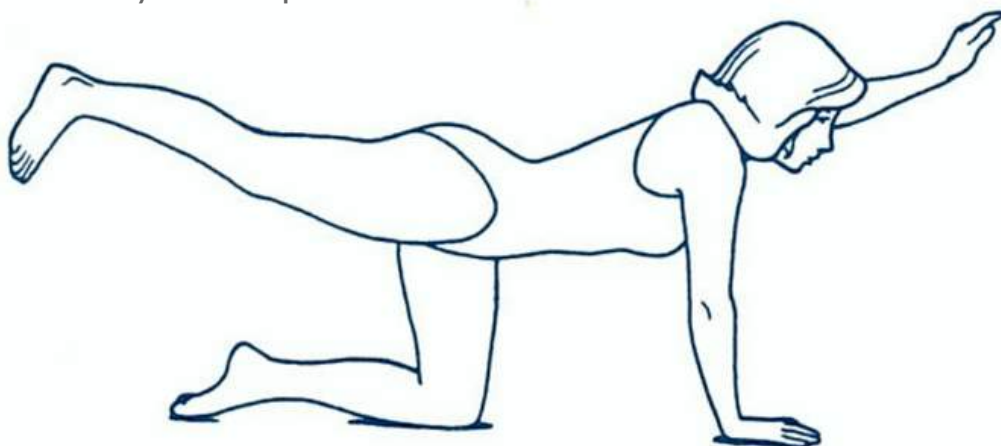


DIAGONALS

On the floor on your hands and knees, lift one arm forward until it is parallel to the ground. Then lift the diagonally opposite leg up so it is also parallel to the ground. Hold for five seconds.

Repeat with the other side.

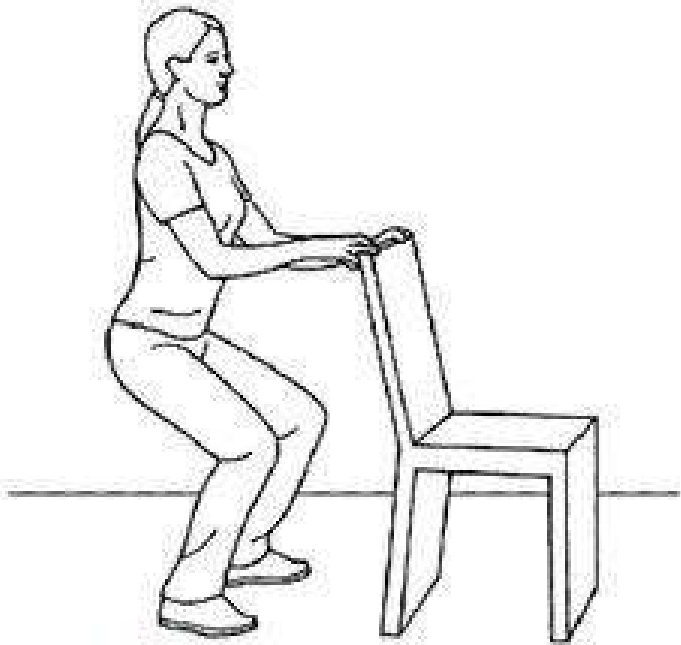
Maintain control through your trunk by drawing up the pelvic floor and keeping some tension in your tummy. Build up to 10 each side.



SQUATS

When done correctly, squats build strength in the gluteal muscles, which are often under-developed thanks to a lot of time sitting. You can stand holding a chair or stand in front of a chair. Stick your bottom out, then lower it down until the back of your thighs touch the chair. Push back up to standing again. keep Pelvic floor drawn up and lower abdomen engaged.

Aim for three sets of 10 over a day.



Try incorporating exercises into your daily routine. For example, do 10 squats when you sit for each meal, and the single leg balance while doing things in the kitchen. These exercises are suitable for people getting started.

However, if you have trouble doing them, or specific health issues, you might need a different set of exercises to address your problem areas.

See one of our physios for advice.

GET SOME PHYSIO HELP

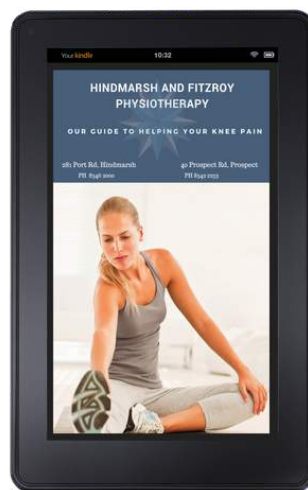
Our Caring and experienced Physiotherapists have the skills to correctly assess your problems and provide safe and effective treatment. Its is very tempting to think that its nothing and it will go away on its own, but early treatment can be the key to a quicker resolution if youre suffering with persistent pain.

If you are in the Adelaide area, you can book an assessment with one of our experienced physiotherapists in Hindmarsh and Prospect by calling our Physiotherapy clinics on 83462000 and 83422233. Let us help you to move better and feel better.

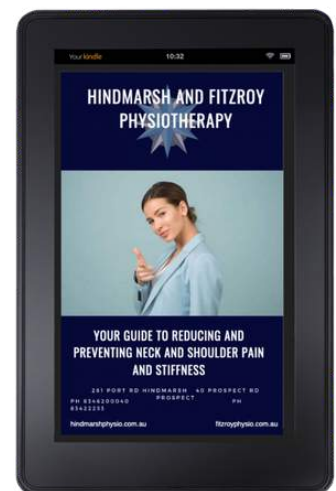
As Physios, we provide extensive education as part of our management and prevention programs, but realize not everyone can find the time or have the confidence to make an appointment. You are welcome to download these informative E-books that you may find useful to get you on your way.



**MANAGING
BACK PAIN**



**MANAGING
KNEE PAIN**



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You can call us on 83462000 at Hindmarsh and 83422233 for Fitzroy, Prospect or **CONTACT US ONLINE HERE** if you would like an appointment

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