

# **7 REASONS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE**

## 1. 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.

## 2. Core exercises don't require specialized equipment or a gym membership

Any exercise that uses the trunk of your body without support counts as a core exercise. Abdominal crunches are a classic core exercise. Try lying on your back and placing your feet on a wall so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles. Tighten your abdominal muscles, then raise your head and shoulders off the floor. Classic push-ups count, too. You can also do push-ups on your knees or standing up against a wall.

## 3. Core exercises can help tone your abs

Want more defined abdominal muscles? Core exercises are important. Although it takes aerobic activity to burn abdominal fat, core exercises can strengthen and tone the underlying muscles.

## 4. Strong core muscles make it easier to do most physical activities

Strong core muscles make it easier to do everything from swinging a golf club to getting a glass from the top shelf or bending down to tie your shoes. Weak core muscles leave you susceptible to poor posture, lower back pain and muscle injuries.



## 5. You can take it slow

You don't have to dedicate hours a day to core exercises. Instead, concentrate on doing each exercise with correct technique and proper form. Gradually build up to 10 to 15 repetitions of each exercise. Also remember to take a break when you need one. If you work your core muscles to fatigue during an exercise session, wait at least a day between workouts to give your muscles time to recover.

## 6. You can do core exercises at home

Remember, you don't have to trek to the gym to do core exercises. Try them on the floor at home while you're watching your favorite shows. You can even do core exercises with a fitness ball. To do abdominal crunches with a fitness ball, for example, sit on the ball with your feet resting on the floor, about hip-width apart. Cross your arms on your chest, tighten your abdominal muscles and lean back until your abdominal muscles kick in. Hold for three deep breaths, then return to the starting position and repeat.

## 7. Core exercises can help you reach your fitness goals

Aerobic exercise and muscular fitness are the primary elements of most fitness programs — and stretching counts, too. But to have a truly well-rounded fitness program, you should include core exercises in the mix as well. Whether you're a novice taking the first steps toward fitness or a committed fitness fanatic hoping to optimize your results, a well-rounded fitness program is the best way to reach your fitness goals.