

### CORE STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

The 'core' refers to the deep abdominal muscles (transversus abdominus, deep fibres of internal oblique, multifidus), as well as the muscles of the pelvic floor. The abdominal component lies deep to the '6-pack' muscle and wraps around the spine like a corset. The pelvic floor muscles span from the pubic bone to the tail bone (in between your legs) and help to support your pelvic organs. When functioning correctly, these groups of muscles provide stability to the entire lumbo-pelvic area during our normal daily activity.

The following exercises will help you to build up your core strength and could assist in the prevention of lower back pain. Injury, pain and poor posture can cause dysfunction of the core muscles, so if you have any problems whilst performing these exercises, please contact your physiotherapist.

#### ALTERNATE LEG-LIFTS ON BALL:

Sit up straight on the ball and gently pull your belly button in towards your spine. Hold this position while you lift alternate legs 10cm off the floor. Repeat for 2 minutes.

#### ABDOMINAL CURLS ON BALL:

Start with your back resting on the Ball, feet on the ground and arms across your chest. Slowly bring your chest towards your thighs, using your abdominals. Don't strain with your neck muscles. Do 2 sets of 20.

#### BRIDGING ON BALL:

Start with your back resting on the Ball and your feet on the ground. Lift your bottom up so that your body forms a straight 'bridge'. Keep your tummy and bottom muscles tight and hold for 10 seconds.

#### CORRECT POSTURE

Good posture, whether sitting or standing, involves maintaining the three natural curves of our spine; the cervical, thoracic and lumbar curves. The lumbar and cervical parts of the spine curve in the same direction (forwards), while the thoracic spine curves the other way (backwards). All three of the curves can be maintained in both sitting and standing by ensuring that your ear, shoulder and hip are aligned.



#### CORRECT LIFTING TECHNIQUE

Incorrect lifting is a common cause of back injuries. There are several important steps to follow whilst lifting to minimise the risk of lower back injury:

- Bend your knees and use your legs to lift, not your back
- Keep the load as close to your body as possible
- Do not twist whilst carrying a load
- Get someone to help for heavier or more awkward loads



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