

## Core Strength for younger children

### What is it and why is it important?

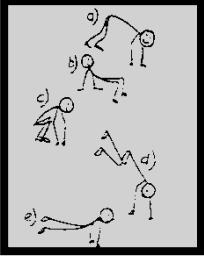
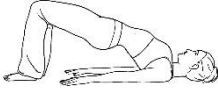


The core muscles are made up of the many different muscles in the abdomen and back that work together to support the spine and hold us upright. The muscles around the shoulder girdle and the hips also form part of the core. Core strength is required as a foundation for most gross and fine motor skills. Without a stable core, your child may struggle to balance, sit still at a desk and to carry out fine motor tasks. This, in turn may affect concentration and the quality of written work.

Small, but regular blasts of core strengthening exercises will be most beneficial to provide a strong core and stable base- every day would be ideal, but we recommend only 10-15 minutes of gross motor exercises per day as your child's strength increases. All core exercises for children should be done slowly with as much control as possible - rather have your child do one or two good repetitions than many sloppy ones.

Children are at school for up to 7 hours a day and have many fine and gross motor demands throughout their school week. By incorporating core strength activities into the classroom and outdoors you may find that children are able to concentrate for an extended amount of time or that their gross motor skills improve. Good core stability help children to maintain a good sitting posture at the desk, and will help develop a stable, supportive base for gross motor and fine motor movements. Additionally:

- The core helps support arm, leg and head movement
- Important for the development of precise hand finger movements
- Postural control become effortless & may help to concentrate
- If a tree doesn't have solid ground it will fall over

## Core strength activities

<p><b>Animal walks</b></p>	<p>See picture.</p> <p>a) Bear b) Crab c) Bunny d) Donkey kick (harder) e) Seal</p>	
<p><b>Bridge pose</b></p>	<p>Lie on the floor with bent knees and lift bottom off the floor as high as possible. Try to hold this as still as possible.</p>	
<p><b>Dog with saw paws</b></p>	<p>On all fours, (hands and knees hip width apart) get children to lift their left arm and right leg simultaneously and then right arm and left leg, try to sustain for a few seconds; this is also good for left and right generalisation.</p>	
<p><b>Ball kick</b></p>	<p>Initially start lying on back, propped on elbows and forearms, head raised, lift feet. Throw ball towards child and they kick ball away with 2 feet. Progress to Lying on back with arms crossed over chest, head raised and chin tucked into chest, lift feet and kick ball away with 2 feet.</p>	
<p><b>Tummy skittles</b></p>	<p>Lying on tummy, lift their head up and then lift their arms above their head. Throw the ball at the skittles, then lower the body gently back to the floor, ready to throw again</p>	