

Core Strength for older children

What is it and why is it important?

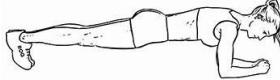
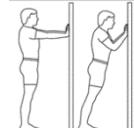
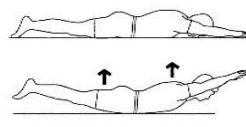
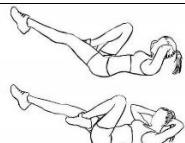
The core muscles are made up of the many different muscles in the abdomen and back that work together to support the spine and hold us upright. The muscles around the shoulder girdle and the hips also form part of the core. Core strength is required as a foundation for most gross and fine motor skills. 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

Plank	On forearms, make sure bottom is low, with head looking forward.	
Wall- sit hold	Suck your belly button into the wall, keep your knees bent to 90 degrees – hold for as long as possible.	
Wall push-ups	Bend your elbows to 90 degrees Feet to remain in place with back straight while elbows flex to 90 degrees and extend.	
Superman	Lay on stomach with arms overhead. Lift arms and legs so upper chest and upper thighs lift off surface, engaging extensor muscles. Arms and legs should be straight. Hold and count for as long as possible.	
Ankle touch crunch	Lie on back with knees bent and hands by sides. Lift the shoulders about 3 inches off the floor. Reach to one side and touch the heel. Do the same thing on the other side. Repeat the movement in alternating keeping head straight and chin up	
Bicycle legs	Lie down keeping hands behind head. Lift both legs off ground bending at a 90 degree angle, pull right knee to chest, keep left leg out. Keep rotating the legs riding like a bike.	

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