



CORE STRENGTHENING

You might not realize it, but strengthening your core is so important! A strong core helps you do your daily activities with ease, whether it be pushing a grocery cart, getting dressed, or getting in and out of your car! It will give you better balance, posture, and even reduce low back pain. Literally, every move you make becomes easier when you have a strong core!

Your core is made up of many muscles, including your rectus abdominus, transverse abdominis, erector spinae, and internal and external obliques. Basically – all the muscles in your stomach and lower back! Keeping these muscles strong will help stabilize your body, support your back, and improve your overall fitness level.

On the following pages you will find 10 exercises you can do to improve your core strength.



1. BRIDGE

- To do this exercise, Start on your back. Bend your knees and plant your feet on the floor at hip width. Place your hands at your sides, palms down.
- Tighten your core and glutes.
- Raise your hips until your knees are in line with your shoulders.
- Hold for 10–30 seconds.



2. CRUNCH

- Start on your back. Bend your knees and plant your feet on the floor at hip width. Line up your head and spine. Cross your arms across your chest.
- Tighten your core and relax your neck and shoulders. Tuck in your chin and lift your upper back, keeping your lower back, pelvis, and feet on the floor. Pause.
- Slowly lower your upper back to return to the starting position.
- Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.





3. PLANK

- Start on all fours, with your hands below your shoulders and your knees below your hips.
- Straighten your legs behind you, keeping your feet hip-width apart. Tighten your core.
- Hold for 10–30 seconds.
- Modification: To make this exercise easier, place your knees on the floor.



4. TOE TAPS

- Start on your back. Lift your legs, knees bent to 90 degrees. Place your hands at your sides, palms down.
- Tighten your core. Lower your right foot and gently tap the floor, keeping your left leg still and your back flat.
- Raise your right leg to return to the starting position. Repeat with your left leg.
- Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.





5. BIRD DOG

- Start on all fours, hands below your shoulders and knees below your hips.
- Tighten your core. Lift and straighten your right leg to hip level. Simultaneously lift and extend your left arm to shoulder level, palm down. Pause.
- Repeat with your left leg and right arm.
- Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.



6. MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

- Start in a plank with your hands below your shoulders. Tighten your core.
- Lift your right knee toward your chest, keeping your back straight and hips down.
- Return your right leg to the starting position as you simultaneously lift your left knee toward your chest.
- Continue alternating legs. Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.





7. WARRIOR CRUNCH

- Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width and your toes turned outward. Put your hands behind your head and open your chest.
- Tighten your core and glutes. Bend your knees until your thighs are parallel to the floor.
- Bend your torso to the side, moving your right elbow toward your right thigh. Repeat on the left side.
- Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.





8. BICYCLE CRUNCH

- Start on your back. Bend your knees and plant your feet on the floor at hip width. Line up your head and spine. Place your hands behind your head, elbows pointing out to the sides.
- Tighten your core and move your shoulders back and down. Bend your right knee toward your chest and extend your left leg, lifting it a few inches off the floor.
- Lift your left shoulder and upper back, bringing your left elbow toward your right knee.
- Tap your left shoulder on the floor and simultaneously switch your legs.
- Continue alternating elbows and knees, starting with 1 set of 8–12 reps.





9. SIDE PLANK WITH ROTATION

- Lie on your right side with your right forearm below your shoulder. Extend your legs, left foot on top of right. Tighten your core.
- Lift your hips to form a straight line with your body. Raise your left arm straight up.
- Rotate your torso toward the floor and bring your left arm under your body.
- Rotate your torso and straighten your left arm to return to the starting position.
- Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.
- Repeat on the other side.



10. BIRD DOG WITH ELBOW TO KNEE

- Start on all fours, hands below your shoulders and knees below your hips.
- Tighten your core. Lift and straighten your right leg to hip level. Simultaneously lift and extend your left arm to shoulder level, palm down.
- Bring your right knee and left elbow toward each other. Return to the starting position.
- Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.
- Repeat on the other side.