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Core Strength & Posture



A Strong Cr progress!

Stretching and strengthening exercises help your back to stay strong and keeps your spine in a good alignment. These exercises also help to strengthen your abdominal, lower back, and leg muscles.

The spine has three normal curves:

- It's important to keep these curves in good alignment as part of a good posture. The neutral position maintains these curves—this is when your muscles are relaxed and your ears, shoulders, and hips are in a straight line. When you're in the neutral position, your body's weight or the weight of what you are lifting is equally distributed throughout the spine. This helps to lessen the chance of injury to your back



core strength and posture will last a lifetime!

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Chart you're for Life!

Check the boxes each day when y
The work you put in each day improving your

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	W
Week 1				
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4				
Week 5				
Week 6				
Week 7				
Week 8				



Tips for a great workout:

- Don't hold your breath—breathe normally! Breathe in as you start the exercise, and breath out while doing the movement.
- Wear supportive shoes, like sneakers. Flip flops, slides, or being barefoot can make your exercises more challenging.
- Keep a towel and pillow nearby.
- As you begin to exercise, you might feel new things in your body. Your healthcare provider can let you know what to expect.
- If you feel any tingling, sharp pain, or numbness in your back or legs, STOP! Take a break. You can restart the exercise once you feel better.
- Keep your eyes facing forward.
- Don't slouch—keep your shoulders upright and back.
- When sitting upright, tighten your abdomen to support your spine.
- When bending, do so at your hips, not at your waist.
- When lifting, do not twist!

The exercises in this booklet are safe for most people. Your healthcare provider may add special instructions or discuss variations that can make the exercises easier or more challenging.

Strengthening

Calf Stretch



Start by standing in front of a wall or other sturdy object. Step forward with one foot and maintain your toes on both feet to be pointed straight forward. Keep the leg behind you with a straight knee during the stretch. Lean forward towards the wall as you allow your front knee to bend until a gentle stretch is felt along the back of your leg that is most behind you.

Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Do this three times and then switch legs.

Hamstring Stretch

Place a leg up a wall while lying on your back. Your other leg should be positioned with a straight knee and resting on the floor through a doorway or hall. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Do this three times and then switch legs.

Use a pillow to keep your neck from arching.



Hip Flexor Stretch

While kneeling down on one knee, lean forward and bend your front knee until a stretch is felt along the front hip area of the knee-down side.

Hold this stretch for 30 seconds. Do this three times and then switch legs. Keep your stomach muscles tight!



Stay Active!

Low-impact aerobic exercises are a great workout! This can include yoga, walking, swimming, and bicycling.



Why Should You Strengthen Your Core:

No matter what type of exercise you prefer to do on a regular basis, you need your core muscles to help support you. Your core is responsible for supporting you through many of the movements that you take for granted every day, especially when you're exercising!

Strengthening your core carries with it a number of key benefits--many of which you will begin to experience soon after beginning your core-strengthening routine. Increased core strength offers powerful benefits to anyone at any age, allowing you to more effectively complete your exercise routines, perform in the sport of your choice, or even decrease the risk of injury.

As you get older, core strength becomes even more critical to stopping pain and maintaining your performance, not just in the sports and activities that you love, but in every area of your life.

Core Stretching



Leg Reach

Get on your hands and knees, such as a crawling position. Keep your knees directly under your hips and your hands directly under your shoulders. Keeping hips level, extend one leg straight out behind you until it's parallel with the floor. Hold for at least five seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. Complete this 10 times.

Leg Reach CHALLENGE

Extend the opposing arms and legs at the same time. Keep your core muscles tight and your pelvis flat. Hold for at least five seconds. Return to the starting position and repeat on the other side. Complete this 10 times.



Hip Rotator/Piriformis Stretch

While lying on your back with both knee bent, cross your affected leg on the other knee. Next, hold your unaffected thigh and pull it up towards your chest until a stretch is felt in the buttock.

Hold this stretch for 30 seconds. Do this three times and then switch legs.



Single Knee-to-Chest

While Lying on your back, raise your leg up and hold your thigh under your knee while gently pulling it towards your chest for a gentle stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Lower your leg down and repeat three times on each side.



Wall Slide

Leaning up against a wall or closed door on your back, slide your body downward and hold for 10 seconds. Then return back to upright position. Do this five times.

Knees should bend in line with the 2nd toe and not pass the front of the foot.



Quad Stretch

While in a standing position, bend your knee back behind and hold your ankle/foot.

Next, gently pull your knee into a more bent position until a stretch is felt on the front of the thigh. Hold for 30 seconds. Do this three times and then switch legs.



Core Strengthening

Partial Curl-Up

While lying on your back with your arms crossed over your chest, partially curl up your trunk and lift your shoulder blades off the ground. Hold for at least five seconds, then slowly return to lying down. Do this 10 times.

Don't pull with your neck. Keep your arms relaxed and your lower back flat on the floor.



Bridge

While lying on your back with knees bent, tighten your lower abdominals, squeeze your buttocks and then raise your buttocks off the floor/bed about three to five inches. Hold for at least five seconds and then lower yourself. Repeat 10 times.



Make the exercise more challenging by lifting your buttocks until there's a straight line from your knees to your shoulders!

Bridge CHALLENGE

While lying on your back with your knees bent, extend one knee as shown. Next, raise your buttocks off the floor/bed. Hold for at least five seconds, then lower yourself. Repeat 10 times.

Try and maintain your pelvis level the entire time.



Prone Press-Up

Lying face down, slowly press up and arch your back using your arms. Hold for five seconds, then lie back down. Do this 10 times.

Keep your stomach and hips on the floor. Keep your neck straight and ears in line with your shoulders.

Prone Press-Up CHALLENGE

While lying face down, slowly raise your chest upwards and off the ground. Then lower slowly back to the ground. Hold for 30 seconds, then lower yourself. Repeat five times.



Knee Lift

While lying on your back with your knees bent, slowly raise up one foot a few inches, hold for 10 seconds, and then set it back down. Next, perform on your other leg. Use your stomach muscles to keep your spine from moving. Do this 10 times.

Knee Lift CHALLENGE

Lie with both knees bent, arms straight behind your head. Lift one knee, then the other, moving them in a bicycling motion. As each knee comes towards you, bring the arm on the opposite side to meet it. Do this 15 times with each leg.

